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REPORTS

FROM

COMMITTEES:

EIGHT VOLUMES.

—(4.)—

SMALL HOLDINGS.

Session

21 *February* 1889 —— 30 *August* 1889.

12

VOL. XII.

2

1889.

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BR Doc 650
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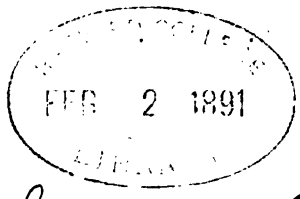

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REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

1889.

EIGHT VOLUMES:—CONTENTS OF THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

N.B.—*THE* Figures *at the* beginning of the line, *correspond with the* N° *at the foot of each* Report; *and the* Figures *at the* end of the line, *refer to the* MS. Paging *of the Volumes arranged for The House of Commons.*

SMALL HOLDINGS:

313. Report from the Select Committee on Small Holdings; with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index. p. 1

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REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

SMALL HOLDINGS;

TOGETHER WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE,

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND APPENDIX.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
9 *August* 1889.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HENRY HANSARD AND SON;
AND
Published by EYRE and SPOTTISWOODE, East Harding-street, London, E.C.,
and 32, Abingdon-street, Westminster, S.W.;
ADAM and CHARLES BLACK, North Bridge, Edinburgh;
and HODGES, FIGGIS, and Co., 104, Grafton-street, Dublin.

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Small Holdings.

Ordered,—[*Friday, 15th March* 1889] :—That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the facilities which exist for the creation of Small Holdings in Land in Great Britain; whether, either in connection with an improved system of Local Government or otherwise, those facilities may be extended; whether, in recent years, there has been any diminution in the number of Small Owners and Cultivators of Land; and whether there is any evidence to show that such diminution is due to legislation.

That the Committee do consist of Seventeen Members.

Committee nominated of—

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Cobb.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir William Hart Dyke.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

That the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

That Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Ordered,—[*Thursday, 2nd May* 1889] :—That Mr. Cobb be discharged from the Committee.

That Mr. Seale-Hayne be added to the Committee.

REPORT - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - p. iii
PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE - - - - - - - - p. iv
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REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the Facilities which exist for the creation of SMALL HOLDINGS in LAND in GREAT BRITAIN; whether, either in connection with an improved System of LOCAL GOVERNMENT or otherwise, those Facilities may be extended; whether, in recent years, there has been any diminution in the number of SMALL OWNERS and CULTIVATORS of LAND; and whether there is any evidence to show that such diminution is due to legislation:——HAVE agreed to the following REPORT:—

YOUR Committee have taken evidence upon the matters referred to them; but, as it will not be in their power to make a full Report in the present Session, they have agreed to report the Evidence already taken, with an Appendix, and to recommend that a Committee on the same subject should be appointed in the next Session of Parliament.

9 August 1889.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Tuesday, 26*th March* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Cobb.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir William Hart Dyke.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN was called to the Chair.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Friday, the 5th April, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 5*th April* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Cobb.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*, a Member of the Committee, was examined.

[Adjourned till Tuesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Tuesday, 9*th April* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Cobb.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir William Hart Dyke.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Chaplin.
Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. *Arthur Arnold* was examined.

[Adjourned till Tuesday, 30th April, at Twelve o'clock.

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Tuesday, 30th April 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Cobb.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*, a Member of the Committee, was examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 3rd May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Mr. Broadhurst.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Llwellyn.
Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*, a Member of the Committee, was examined.

[Adjourned till Tuesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Tuesday, 7th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Mr. Chaplin.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir William Hart Dyke.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Sir Walter Foster.

Mr. *Albert Pell* and Mr. *Jesse Collings* (a Member of the Committee), were examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

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Friday, 10*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

The Lord *Wantage* (attending by permission of the House of Lords) and Mr. *James Warrack*, were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 15*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

The Reverend *Horace Charles Ripley*, Mr. *Walter Dalton*, and Mr. *Alfred de Bock Porter*, were examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 17*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. *William Holman*, Mr. *John Standring*, Mr. *George Wimpenny*, and Mr. *William Gibbons*, were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

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Wednesday, 22*nd May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.	

Mr. *Elias Pitts Squarey* and Mr. *Price Hughes* were examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 24*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Chaplin.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Viscount Curzon.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

Mr. *Arthur C. Humphreys Owen* and Mr. *Thomas Jones* were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 29*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Halley Stewart.

In the absence of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. COMPTON LAWRANCE was called to the Chair.

Major *Patrick George Craigie* was examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

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Friday, 31*st May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.

Mr. *Charles Bidwell* and Mr. *Edmund Beck* were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday, 19th June, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 19*th June* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.

Mr. *J. Theodore Dodd* and Mr. *Sampson Morgan* were examined.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 21*st June* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.

Mr. *Charles Alan Fyffe* and Mr. *Henry Herbert Smith* were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

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Wednesday, 26th June 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Sir Charles Dalyrmple.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.	

The Rev. *Ebenezer Littleton*, Mr. *William Robertson*, and Mr. *George Johnson*, were examined.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 28th June 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Mr. Chaplin.	Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. James William Lowther.	Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Sir George Campbell.	

Mr. *Frederick Punchard*, Mr. *Thomas Rigby*, and Mr. *Joseph Alfred Smith*, were examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 3rd July 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Chaplin.
Sir George Campbell.	Viscount Curzon.
Mr. James William Lowther.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.	

In the absence of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER was called to the Chair.

Mr. *Samuel Benjamin Large Druce*, was examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

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Friday, 5*th July* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Viscount Curzon.
Mr. James William Lowther.	Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.	Mr. Llewellyn.

In the absence of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER was called to the Chair.

Mr. *Richard Burdon Haldane* (a Member of the House) was examined.

The Committee deliberated.

Mr. *John MacGilchrist Ross* was examined.

[Adjourned till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Wednesday, 10*th July* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.	

Mr. *Robert Threshie Reid* (a Member of the House) and Sir *George Campbell* (a Member of the Committee) were examined.

The Committee deliberated.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Percival Birkett be summoned to give evidence before the Committee"—(Sir *Walter Foster*).—Question put.—The Committee divided:

Ayes, 5.	Noes, 3.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.	
Mr. Angus Sutherland.	

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 12*th July* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. James William Lowther.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.

Sir *Henry Longley*, K.C.B., and Mr. *Percival Birkett* were examined.

[Adjourned till Friday the 26th July, at Twelve o'clock.

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Friday, 26th July 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Chaplin.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Viscount Curzon.
Sir William Hart Dyke.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. James William Lowther.	

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Friday, 9th August, at Twelve o'clock.

Friday, 9th August 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN in the Chair.

Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.
Sir Walter Foster.	

Mr. *William Alexander*, Mr. *Robert Duncan*, and Mr. *Griffith Jones*, were examined.

DRAFT REPORT, proposed by the *Chairman*, read the first time, as follows:—

"Your Committee have taken evidence upon the matters referred to them; but, as it will not be in their power to make a full Report in the present Session, they have agreed to report the Evidence already taken, with an Appendix, and to recommend that a Committee on the same subject should be appointed in the next Session of Parliament."

DRAFT REPORT, proposed by the *Chairman*, read a second time, and *agreed to*.

Ordered, To Report, together with the Minutes of Evidence, and an Appendix.

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EXPENSES OF WITNESSES.

NAME OF WITNESS.	PROFESSION OR CONDITION.	From whence Summoned.	Number of Days Absent from Home, under Orders of Committee.	Allowance during Absence from Home.	Expenses of Journey to London and Back.	TOTAL Expenses allowed to Witness.
				£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Mr. Albert Pell	Gentleman	Northampton	1	- -	1 6 9	1 6 9
The Rev. H. C. Ripley	Clergyman	Witney	1	1 1 -	1 - 7	2 1 7
Mr. Walter Dalton	Labourer	Witney	1	- 5 -	- 18 7	1 3 7
Mr. William Holman	Bricklayer	Rugby	2	1 - -	- 17 9	1 17 9
Mr. William Gibbons	Bootmaker	Wellingborough	1	- 10 -	- 10 7	1 - 7
Mr. George Wimpenny	Labourer	Delamere	3	1 1 -	1 8 1	2 9 1
Mr. John Standring	Farmer and Hay Dealer	Doncaster	3	1 10 -	1 9 11	2 19 11
Mr. John Standring*	Farmer and Hay Dealer	Doncaster	3	- 15 -	- -	- 15 -
Mr. Price H. Hughes	Tradesman	Towyn	3	2 5 -	1 18 5	4 3 5
Mr. Arthur C. Humphreys-Owen.	Gentleman	Garthmyl	2	2 2 -	- -	2 2 -
Mr. Thomas Jones	Farmer	Corwen	3	2 5 -	2 4 3	4 9 3
Mr. Edmund Beck	Agent	Lynn	3	2 5 -	1 1 1	3 6 1
Mr. George Johnson	Small Holder	Long Sutton	3	1 10 -	- 18 3	2 8 3
Mr. Thomas Rigby	Farmer	Warrington	1	- 15 -	- 6 -	1 1 -
Mr. Joseph Alfred Smith	Gentleman	Ipswich	1	- -	1 1 -	1 1 -
Mr. John MacGilchrist Ross	Gentleman	Alness	4	4 4 -	7 10 -	11 14 -
Mr. Frederick Punchard	Land Agent	Kirkby Lonsdale	3	3 3 -	3 10 -	6 13 -
The Rev. Ebenezer Littleton	Nonconformist Minister	Tonbridge Wells	2	2 2 -	- 19 -	3 1 -
Mr. William Alexander	Journalist	Aberdeen	4	4 4 -	6 13 6	10 17 6
Mr. Robert Duncan	Mechanic	Perth	4	2 - -	4 - 11	6 - 11
		TOTAL £.		32 17 -	37 14 8	70 11 8

* The Committee desired that Mr. Standring should be paid on the rate of "Tradesman" instead of "Mechanic."

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Friday, 5th April 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Cobb.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS, a Member of the Committee; Examined.

Chairman.

1. I BELIEVE that you have had very considerable experience in connection with the agricultural population?—Yes; I was brought up among them, and all my life I have had a more or less close connection with them, and have taken a very active and practical interest in questions affecting their condition.

2. You have paid particular attention to the question of allotments and small holdings?—Yes, and every other means by which a closer interest and connection can be established between the rural population and the land.

3. You attach very great importance to the multiplication of small holdings, as affecting the prosperity of the agricultural classes?—Yes, both from an economic point of view as affecting the prosperity or depression of trade and agriculture, and also from a social point of view, as bearing upon such questions as the "unemployed" and "overcrowding" in large towns, and other evils of that kind, to which I believe the question has a distinct and immediate reference.

4. You have had experience, I believe, of the condition of the poor in large towns as well as in the country?—Yes; during the past 25 years I have taken considerable part in the government of a large town, and I have had a good deal of experience as to the conditions of that town, and also of the immediate connection between the state of the land and the unsatisfactory features connected with the town population.

5. In recent years there has been some legislation in reference to the creation of allotments?—Yes. If I may say so, I take it that we are

Chairman—continued.

not going into the allotment question. I have had, myself, a Bill before Parliament for some years dealing with allotments and small holdings; but the allotment portion of it has been dropped; and, so far as the consideration of this Committee goes, I take it that it is confined more especially to the question of small holdings.

6. The allotment part of your measures has already been more or less dealt with by legislation?—Yes. I have still a Small Holdings Bill before Parliament; and I believe that there is a great and growing interest in the question throughout the country, and also in the House of Commons. The question undoubtedly received a great impetus by the extension of the franchise in 1885, as the rural labouring population care more about that question than about almost anything else you can place before them. I consider that the passing of the Act of 1887 by the Government is a proof of the increased interest which is taken in the question by both sides of the House of Commons.

7. There was also, I believe, an Allotments Extension Act passed in 1882?—Yes; that Act has been a great benefit; but it referred to charity lands only, whereas the Act of 1887 professes to deal with all lands.

8. The character, I think, of this legislation which dealt with the allotment part of the question was to give increased facilities to local authorities to deal with lands for the purpose of providing allotments?—Precisely.

9. Now, will you tell us what is your distinction between allotments and small holdings, the

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Chairman—continued.

small holdings being more particularly the subject of inquiry by this Committee?—Of course, it is difficult to draw an absolute line, but for the purpose of this inquiry I should in my own mind consider an allotment to be a piece of land held and cultivated by a man who reckons to gain his livelihood by weekly wages, and who cultivates his land in his spare time with the primary object of supplying his family with potatoes, vegetables, and other articles for his own consumption.

10. Then how do you define small holdings?—Small holders, on the other hand, are of two kinds, and I should define the first as those who get their living from the land by raising produce for sale. In this case the holding should be large enough for the purpose, and the holder should have sufficient capital to hold and cultivate it. The second class, and, to my mind, a most valuable class of cultivator, would be those who, while they have some spare time and money to cultivate land, are partially employed in some other occupation or business, such as will suggest itself to every member of the Committee acquainted with village populations. There are a large number of people in the villages and in rural districts generally, who are in a position to cultivate land in their spare time while carrying on their ordinary occupations.

11. You divide small holders, as I understand, into two classes, one of which obtain from the land their subsistence, and the other which uses it as an additional means of subsistence to some other trade or occupation?—Yes, in addition to some other occupation in which he may be employed.

12. Will you give us an example of the second class?—I would like to give a typical example of a very practical character. A short time ago, speaking at a village in Gloucestershire, and advocating this principle, I happened to mention wheelwrights among others as men who would be likely to be able to combine the cultivation of a small holding with their ordinary trade. After the meeting was over, a very respectable man came to me and said, "I have heard your statement; I am a wheelwright. Trade lately has been bad with me, and one of my two sons who have been engaged in trade with me all their lifetime, has now been obliged to go into Gloucester to seek employment. If I could get a few acres of land on the terms you have spoken of, I could have kept my sons at home in case my own trade would revive (which I hope it will), and in any case we three together, knowing something about land, and having a moderate amount of capital, could cultivate it between us to the greatest advantage to ourselves and to the land." That is a typical case that might be multiplied a hundredfold in rural districts.

13. I take it that your view is that this is typical of what has been sometimes called the immigration into towns?—Yes.

14. Here was a man who might have been retained upon the land with advantage to himself and the country, but who was forced to go into the town there to increase the competition for employment?—Yes, that recalls the reply I made to him at the time. My reply to him was this: you are not only put to disadvantage in your village by losing the services of your son, but your son goes into Gloucester to get employment as a wheelwright where probably he is not wanted; and if he does get employment the chances are that he will displace some other man in the town. He said, "That is perfectly true." I had another typical illustration a short time ago in our own town of Birmingham, where I had put the same views in public. A man met me in the street and said, "I came from the land originally; I am now engaged in Birmingham as a haulier; I have horses and carts and a little capital, but the competition is so severe and is getting more severe every day, that even by working hard we can hardly make any headway. If I could get a small holding of the kind and on the terms you name, I would go back to the land to-morrow, as I understand cultivation;" he added that his wife and family were of the same opinion. I could multiply those cases; I have given you two; and if I might be allowed, I would add another case, that of a railway porter, who was the son of a farmer in North Devon. A few months ago he was in London, and came to me and said that he did not like his post; he was the youngest son of four; his father had five children and a small farm, and in spite of the hard life that he would have to lead in the country, his distaste for a town life was so great that he was about to throw up his wages (whatever they might be) on the railway in order to go back to the country even as an agricultural labourer; he could do nothing better.

15. Your idea, as I understand it, is that if the facilities for getting small holdings were greater, there would be plenty of demand for them?—Yes; I do not wish to convey the idea that there would be a rush into the country, but for the gradual creation of a cultivating proprietary there would be a considerable percentage of people from our towns who would gladly take advantage of those facilities.

16. Your attention, of course, has been directed to the terms of the reference?—Yes, I noticed that the reference is; first, "whether in recent years there has been diminution in the number of small owners and cultivators of land;" and secondly, if so, "whether there is any evidence to show that such diminution is due to legislation."

17. Those two points, I think, must be treated together?—It will be difficult to treat them quite separately, I think.

18. In explaining your opinions as to the diminution of small owners and cultivators, you would probably wish to give us evidence as to what, in your opinion, are the causes of the diminution?—Yes.

19. Have you any statistics upon the subject?—With regard to the first query, it is very difficult to produce statistics of much value setting forth definitely the number and sizes of holdings at different dates. One great, and I presume admitted, cause of diminution in the number of small farms, is the practice of consolidation of small farms into large ones, which has obtained for many generations past.

20. Have you known instances of that kind?—I have

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Chairman—continued.

I have known a great number; I could give typical instances of it, if necessary, but the process is so notorious to all who have studied the condition of agriculture, either practically or by historical research, for the past generation or the past generations, that I presume the contention will be admitted. As an instance, I may say that I was, a short time ago, looking over a farm where there was a 12-acres' holding alongside of it, which within a few years had been laid down to grass and joined to the adjoining farm, and the farm building on the small holding was then going into decay. I know another case where a man, who was farming 80 or 90 acres to advantage, was, I do not say compelled, but induced to take a neighbouring farm of something like 40 or 50 acres. The intention was to do him good, but seeing that he had no extra capital whatever to farm this extra amount of land, I have reason to know that he was not doing so well after that as before.

21. Of course these cases you are referring to are all cases of small tenant farmers who have been absorbed by larger farmers?—Yes.

22. Have you anything to say with regard to freeholders?—In the case of freeholders, during a period of commercial prosperity and good times generally, and at a time also when there was a greater desire for land on account of social and political power attached to it, prices were offered by large landowners and capitalists which many freeholders could not withstand, and they took them, and consequently many freeholders were extinguished in this manner.

23. Have you any evidence to that effect?—Yes. I had a letter within the last fortnight from the head of a large firm of land surveyors who gives me this as an instance: "One estate of 15,000 *l.* a year had been so aggregated by such purchases, entirely within my own memory in the last 50 years, in many cases 40 years' purchase, and in some cases 50 years' purchase having been paid; in fact, land got to be a luxury that only the rich could afford to buy." Of course, he is not speaking of the present moment, but of the past 50 years.

24. Your view, I understand, is that at the time when the competition for land was very great, in consequence of its supposed advantages in a political and social sense, small freeholders were continually being extinguished by accepting the high prices offered under those circumstances?—Yes.

25. And that as there were no artificial means replacing them the number of freeholders has been permanently reduced?—Yes. I should add that not only were there no artificial means, but there were no natural means; there was no class from which a natural supply could be drawn, as in the case of other industries, to fill the place of those men who had been bought out.

26. There was a continual drain upon the number of existing freeholders, and no natural or artificial means of replacing them?—Quite so.

27. You have studied, have you not, the Reports of Royal Commissions on this subject?—Yes, very closely.

Chairman—continued.

28. There was a Commission in 1867, was there not?—Yes.

29. Will you tell us what the Commission was?—It was a Commission on the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children in Agriculture. That was the name of the Commission.

Mr. *Ellis.*

30. Did that inquiry relate to Wales also?—It related to England and Wales, and extended also to Scotland. The evidence before that Commission proves beyond doubt the practice of the consolidation of small farms, and although the Report does not deprecate the practice, yet the evidence shows the existence of it in almost every district. They give as the reason why the small tenant farmers consent to give up their farms, the high rents they pay, there not being enough land, want of education, and scientific knowledge. The Commissioners state that they are "a very industrious race, imparting industrious habits to their children who prefer their position on account of its independence"; and another witness says, in deprecating the practice, "if small farms disappear the advantages derived from them ought to be preserved in some form"; he does not suggest any form. Then in the Appendix to Mr. Tremenheere's Report the cause is described as the increased competition for land and the high prices offered tempting men to part with it. That remark refers to freehold. One of the witnesses says, "I was informed by a land agent of great experience that a third of the existing tenants were once farm servants," showing that at that time there was a means for the rural classes to become farmers.

Chairman.

31. But does not that tell against your argument?—At that time.

32. Does not that show, that at that time persons who had previously been labourers were becoming small tenants?—Yes; but I was saying that owing to such prices being offered to them, and the rents being so high, and the insufficiency of land, the large owners were buying up the small holders to a large extent, and of course when once the small holdings became bought up, they were no longer in the market for any one to buy, even if they had the money to do so.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

33. Do I understand that what you have been quoting is in one of the Sub-Commissioner's Reports?—It is in the evidence printed in Mr. Tremenheere's Report; you will find it in the second volume of the Report. Another witness says, the consolidation of farms is becoming general, as it is found by landed proprietors to be more beneficial to their interests. Perhaps the honourable Member will remember the example given of Sir Frederick Graham's estate at Netherby, where in 1835, there were 315 tenants, and at the time of the Report in 1867, there were 115 tenants only; it states further

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

further that the rental of the estate had increased by 30 per cent., but it is also to be stated that there was a considerable outlay upon the estate in consolidating the small farms.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

34. What county was that in?—In the county of Cumberland.

Chairman.

35. I think some of the previous instances which you have quoted had also reference to Cumberland and Westmoreland; evidence was given before that Commission that the number of farms in Cumberland and Westmoreland was greatly decreasing?—Yes; but I do not want to confine the observation to that district because the evidence shows that generally throughout England and Wales, and throughout England particularly, that process has been also taking place, only of course it was more remarkable in Cumberland and Westmoreland so far as the freeholders go, because they existed there in a number that was not found in any other part.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

36. Could you give us the reference to the Netherby case?—The Netherby case is in the second volume of the Report of 1867, at page 539.

Chairman.

37. I think Dr. Fraser, the late Bishop of Manchester, was an Assistant Commissioner to this Report was he not?—He was an Assistant Commissioner, and he refers very markedly to this process of consolidation. He refers to ruined dwellings, many of them farmhouses, attesting (to use his own words) the "change in the phrase of agricultural life which has merged half-a-dozen occupations" (by that he means holdings) "into one holding."

38. I think, so far as the evidence taken by this Commission is concerned, there was an universal agreement that there was this diminution of small holdings and consolidation into large farms?—Yes; that is my conclusion from the evidence.

39. Many of the witnesses not only attested that but defended it on grounds of public policy?—Yes; it is right to say that many of the witnesses gave evidence in opposition to that policy. For example, there is one witness who states as follows: "I am of opinion that to absorb small holdings in large farms will ultimately be found unwise and impolitic. I look upon this class as one of the groundworks of our national stability; higher rents are obtainable from them; more attention is given by small holders to the production of butter, poultry, eggs, &c. &c., often beneath the notice of large farmers." Another witness states that he believes "this tendency to form large farms is economically a mistake;" and there are many others of the same opinion.

Mr. *Cobb.*

40. Did I rightly understand that the witness you quoted last but one, said that higher rents

Mr. *Cobb*—continued.

are obtainable from the smaller farms?—Yes, that is one reason why it is economically a mistake to destroy them.

Chairman.

41. Do the Assistant Commissioners in this Report express themselves in favour of small farms?—The Reports of the Commissioners themselves are mainly in opposition to the creation of a peasant proprietary. If you take Mr. Cully, for instance, who was an Assistant Commissioner, he was opposed to a great extent to small holdings, and yet he is obliged to admit that it has often been represented to him that "the great increase in the size of the farms is to be regretted, as it deprives the provident and industrious labourer of the old inducement to save money and become a farmer, large farms being out of his reach."

42. Then why, holding this opinion, does he conclude against small holdings?—He thinks that the increased wages which the use of machinery affords is a greater incentive to thrift. He admits that consolidation can be carried too far, and that the increasing use of machinery will soon allow the small farms to compete with large ones.

43. Do you agree with that argument?—My opinion is that with regard to the wages it is altogether an incorrect view, and it illustrates, to my mind, the disadvantage of gentlemen, however able and conscientious (and they were very able and very conscientious), starting on this inquiry with what I may call prejudices against a system of small holding. As to the increase of wages being an inducement to thrift, as he contends here, I altogether disagree with that; besides which, the increase of wages was not remarkable at all; at any rate, not such as to warrant such a statement as that. Moreover, the opinion that he gives, that machinery will soon place small farms on a level with large farms seems to contradict his own contention as to the advantage of the latter.

44. That is to say, that if he were right in that, the argument in favour of large farms, that they enable machinery to be used, would fall to the ground?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

45. Do I understand then that his evidence is to this effect, that machinery can be used with as much advantage on small farms as on large ones?—This is what he says: he admits that this tendency (that is, the tendency to consolidation) might be carried too far, and the increasing use of machinery will soon allow the small farms to compete with large ones. That seems to me to go against his own contention.

Chairman.

46. May I ask you your own opinion upon that; do you consider that that has been the result; is machinery now being used on small farms, and does it enable them to compete with large ones?—I think that machinery both in England, and certainly in such countries as Belgium, is quite as much used on the small farms

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Chairman—continued.

farms as on the larger ones, if you will except such a machine as a steam-plough. Taking machinery as a whole, the small farmers of Belgium and the small farmers of England use machinery to as large an extent in proportion as the large farmers. Might I be allowed on that subject, as the question of machinery has been introduced, to say this: I have noticed in Belgium how much machines are used; there was a statement, I think made at one of the agricultural societies, to the contrary, and it was instanced in proof of that statement that the Belgian peasant farmer used the old wooden roller. I immediately wrote to M. de Laveleye on the point, and I have his reply, in which he gives the reasons for that being the case. He says that the soil is so very light in Flanders, and, he adds, of such a character that if it were in England it would be out of cultivation altogether; it is so very light that the farmer finds that the light wooden roller is absolutely the best for his purpose, I mean for the purpose of farming; he finds that it is actually better than the heavy roller. M. de Laveleye goes on to add, with regard to the ploughs and other machinery, that they are generally very good.

47. His statement, as I understand, is that in this case an antiquated instrument is used, because after all it is really the best for the purpose?—It is the best for the soil.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

48-9. What sized holdings is he referring to?—He does not name any particular size, but states that the soil in Flanders is sandy, on which it is necessary to use light rollers. and that the wooden ones have been found to be the best for the country.

Chairman.

50. This process of the consolidation of farms is a practice which went on at the time of the report, and for some time subsequently?—Yes.

51. Does it go on at the present moment?—I should say not. I should think that Nemesis is overtaking the landowner, and his object now, as far as expenses will allow, is to change the land back into small holdings.

52. You do not think at present there is any tendency on the part of landowners to further consolidate their farms?—I should think quite the contrary.

53. Under these circumstances do you suggest that any legislation should be attempted in order to prevent the consolidation of farms?—No; I do not think any legislation could be attempted with regard to private landowners, as they have already found out the mistake that has been made; and no doubt but for the expense of farm buildings and other expenses connected with division, they would throw the land back into smaller holdings again.

54. At the same time there are some precedents for such legislation, I believe, in early history?—Yes; there are many curious precedents, showing that the difficulty existed more or less

Chairman—continued.

even in the time of Henry the Seventh. It was enacted, for instance, in his time, that "no one should take more than one farm, and that its value should not be more than 10 marks yearly." Then again a law of Edward the Sixth, in 1549, enacted, that "freeholders of small tenements should have as much pasture on the Lord's waste as did suffice unto their tenements." Then there is the Act of Elizabeth in 1589, which has been since repealed, which enacted that no man should build a cottage with less than four acres of land at least attached to it. In the reign of Henry the Seventh, when landowners were beginning to depopulate their estates, to make way for cattle, the King asked them the reason, and they replied, to make more money of their lands by their conversion into pasture holdings; and the reply of the King is given in history, and I have no doubt the honourable Members have read it; it was this, "You depopulate to make money; the defence of the kingdom devolves on me; the enemy may appear; in such event cattle won't fight, men will; I require that you at once restore to their holdings the tenants that you have evicted." An Act was at once passed, requiring, under penalty of forfeiture of property, that every landlord in England should see that there be erected on his estate a dwelling and out-offices on every 40 statute acres of land.

55. Then with regard to foreign countries, is there anything you wish to call our attention to?—In Denmark a farm under 25 acres cannot be sub-divided, except under very special circumstances, and by permission of the Government, it being considered that 25 acres is the minimum on which a man could live and support his family.

56. You contend that by this natural economic process, so to speak, of buying out small freeholders, the number of small holders has also been greatly reduced, as I understand?—Very much reduced.

57. Is there any other cause of diminution to which you would wish to make reference?—Yes. So far as small freeholders are concerned, one great cause of their diminution is the unlimited power of mortgage which they possess, which leads the owner into the hands of the money-lender, and into difficulties from which he never or rarely recovers. There is a great deal of evidence in proof of this given before the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1882, of which the honourable Member for the Sleaford division of Lincolnshire was a member.

58. Do you wish to refer more particularly to the evidence before that Commission?—There is a good deal of evidence before that Commission referring to the Isle of Axholme, for instance, where it is shown that the money they had borrowed hampered them very much. The same remark might be applied to small holdings in other countries. I would refer to the Report of Mr. Jenkins, one of the Assistant Commissioners, in which (to state it shortly) he makes these remarks with regard to the drawbacks to a small proprietary in France; he says one drawback is the excessive sub-division, and the second, what he calls the "demon of property," which is the curse of the French peasant, and makes him beg,

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Chairman—continued.

borrow, and almost to steal, or starve himself to get hold of property; the third is the recklessness with which peasants borrow at ruinous rates in order to complete purchases and increase their possessions. Then he goes on to estimate the extent to which the land of France is mortgaged; and there is a good deal of evidence of that kind scattered through his Report, which is summed up in those sentences which I have quoted.

59. I understand you would say generally that wherever small holdings exist, whether in the United Kingdom or on the Continent, the power to mortgage has been a cause of embarrassment to them, and ultimately of diminution in their numbers?—Yes, I should think it was one of the chief causes.

60. Do you consider that that power of mortgage is an essential part of any system of small holding?—I have a very strong opinion that any scheme for the creation of peasant proprietary or small cultivating ownership would be subject to great difficulties and liable to fail unless the power of mortgaging land was taken away altogether or permitted only to a very limited extent.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

61. I suppose you refer to private mortgaging?—Yes, private mortgaging; I am not speaking of State loans, or loans advanced by local authorities.

Chairman.

62. We have been dealing hitherto with tenants and owners who hold self-contained farms or properties, which they are dependent upon for their subsistence; but you have spoken of another class of small holders who have rights over the land or privileges in the land as an adjunct of their ordinary means of subsistence?—Yes. Leaving that class of farmers who farm separate and self-contained farms, there is another class of small holders distinct from them who existed in former times in very large numbers, and formed indeed a very large portion of the rural population, who got their living on the soil, not as mere wage-receivers, but as an independent and semi-independent cultivating class. In some cases they held only a small piece of land, sometimes a mere allotment, but they had large and substantial common rights and privileges. They, in fact, formed the peasantry of this country as distinct from the wage-earning agricultural labourers of the present day. They were farmers, or formed the link between the regular farmer and the labourer.

63. Do you think that this class has been materially decreased in number?—It has been very largely decreased; almost extinguished as a class.

64. As regards the class with which we were previously dealing, you have pointed out that the diminution in their numbers is not due to legislation so much as to the demand for land by wealthy persons, and the desire to consolidate farms?—Yes, I should like to qualify that by saying that it is also due to the existence of general legislation connected with our land, such as entail and settlement, and the difficulty and expense of land transfer; all those I distinctly hold to be very great barriers to the creation of

Chairman—continued.

small holdings, but I do not refer to any special legislation.

65. That rather comes to this: that owing to this legislation the number was indirectly prevented from increase, while at the same time what I have called natural causes led to its diminution?—Yes.

66. Now with regard to the class we are now considering, I think it is your view, is it not, that legislation has been directly responsible for the reduction of their number?—Yes, legislation, both public and private, in the direction of enclosures has very fatally affected them as a class, and in fact caused them, as a class, almost to disappear.

67. When did this process take place?—It began from very early times, but it was mainly carried out in the middle and end of the last century, and up to the first generation of the present century; and has continued in a very much less degree to the present day.

68. What has the general result been?—It has been, speaking generally, to reduce the peasant class of cultivators who used to exist in our country, to mere wage-receiving labourers, and to create a gap between the farmer and labourer which the labourer finds it impossible to get over, creating, in fact, a class of men in England which, so far as I know, exists in no other country in Europe.

69. That is to say, a class of men on the land who are condemned by the circumstances of the case always to remain wage-receiving labourers?—Yes; that is the effect of it. Although, as I stated, that process is necessarily obtaining very little at the present time, yet the effect of the process carried on during the present century and the last century is felt in the present time by the existence of this landless class among us.

70. Have you historical evidence of the existence of the class of which you speak in former times, and of the great distinction between them and the present dependent labouring class?—Yes, I have masses of evidence extracted from histories of parishes, histories of counties, trials connected with the Inclosure Acts, and a variety of other historical information, for the information is necessarily historical, which I will not trouble the Committee with in detail, but which support the opinions I have placed before the Committee.

71. You attach very great importance, I believe, to this branch of the inquiry?—Yes, I think it is absolutely impossible for the Committee to understand the nature of the present difficulty without reference to these historical causes, which extend far back, but which have led up to the present position of affairs.

72. Now, have you any knowledge of the extent to which these inclosures have gone on?—For that I would refer the Committee to the evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Emigration in 1827. A witness before that Committee states (it is at page 359 of the Proceedings, if honourable Members wish to refer to it in full) that, "Since 1760 they, the labourers, had lost above 4,000,000 acres of common which they had formerly the privilege of using for their pigs, geese,

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Chairman—continued.

geese, and a variety of other things." That quantity had been lost as between 1760 and 1827.

73. Have you any further evidence to the same effect?—Yes, I would refer to the debate on the General Inclosure Bill of 1845, a Bill which was brought in in consequence of the Report of the Commissioners of 1843. The quotation I am speaking of will be found in "Hansard," volume 78, page 310; where Mr. Cowper says, "It appeared from history that before the land of England was fully brought into cultivation, almost all cottagers had land for tillage. Since 1800 no fewer than 2,000 Inclosure Acts had passed. The amount of acreage is not given in the returns, but it must form no inconsiderable portion of the land of the country." The speaker then goes on to speak of the consolidation of small farms as depriving the labouring man of opportunities of holding land, and then declares, to use his own words, that the result of these combined causes (that is, consolidation and inclosure) "was that until the allotment system revived, the English labourer was severed from all connection with the land."

74. In regard to that statement to the effect that no fewer than 2,000 Inclosure Acts had been passed since 1800; do you know the total number of such Acts that have been passed?—Yes, my authority for that is Porter's "Progress of the Nation," which gives them in detail, and as they are quoted by such men as Mr. Seebohm and Professor Thorold Rogers, and other gentlemen who have written on this question, they may probably be taken to be correct. According to Porter's "Progress of the Nation," there were from 1760 to 1844, 3,867 Inclosure Acts.

75. Does that apply to Scotland?—No, I think not. In all my evidence I have, as far as possible, left out reference to Scotland, because the condition of things is so different there, and I am not acquainted with the conditions there. Perhaps it might be interesting if I gave the number in each decade as they are given in Mr. Porter's book. From 1760 to 1769 there were 385 Inclosure Acts; from 1770 to 1779 there were 660; from 1780 to 1789 there were 246; from 1790 to 1799 there were 469; from 1800 to 1809 (that is when the price of corn was so high during the French War), there were 847; from 1810 to 1819 there were 853. The total I gave of 3,867 was as between 1760 and 1844, but I have not got here the figures for the decades subsequent to 1820. I have only given a few to show the progressive rate at which inclosures went on; that is my object in giving these details.

76. Have you any information as to the number of acres so inclosed?—Yes; according to the Report of the Select Committee on Emigration in 1827 (the Report from which I have already quoted), and the Report of the Royal Commission of 1867 to which I have referred, there were inclosed in England and Wales from 1760 to 1867, 7,325,439 acres.

77. Now I may just interpose this question there; those inclosures are what you may call legal inclosures; as a matter of fact, are there not a great number of other inclosures which have not been confirmed by Act?—Yes; these refer

Chairman—continued.

to Acts of Parliament, but inclosures under such statutes as the Statute of Merton and the Statute of Westminster, which belong to the 13th century, had been going on prior to this and since; to what extent it is impossible to tell.

78. There is no doubt, therefore, that these figures will have to be greatly increased to show the total extent of these inclosures?—Yes. Might I, while I am upon the subject, refer to the Report of the Select Committee on Waste Lands in 1795. In that Report the Committee are in favour of facilitating these inclosures as being for the public advantage, but they recommend that the rights of these commoners or rural population should be respected, and they quote a case of inclosure which took place 20 years before (the Committee will bear in mind that this Report was in 1795), in which the rural population were dealt with in what you may almost term a satisfactory manner. I will read this portion, because it will show to what extent in those days, in the last century, the rights of these men were recognised, which are now, I am afraid, not even known or referred to: "A commoners' land, belonging to a parish in Worcestershire, which is situated very near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, was inclosed about 22 years ago, and there was an allotment containing 25 acres set out for the use of such of the poor as rented less than 10 *l.* a year to be stocked in common." (You will see that they are called poor, but their rental is as high as 10 *l.* a year.) "At that time there were about 16 people on the parish books, some of whom had families; previous to the inclosure, there were some few cottages that had land let with them to the amount of 6 *l.* or 7 *l.* a year each." (I may remind the Committee that at the date I speak of, that is, the early part of the eighteenth century, that represented a considerable amount.) "The occupiers of these cottages with land annexed to them were remarkable for bringing up their families in a more neat and decent manner than those whose cottages were without land, and it was this consequence which induced the lord of the manor (to whom almost the whole of the parish belonged) to lay out a plot of lands (besides the common before mentioned) to other cottages, and to add a small building sufficient to contain a horse or a cow, and likewise grafting stocks to raise orchards." As an illustration of what these small holders were allowed, he goes on to say: "Their stock consists of a cow, a yearling, heifer, or a mare to breed, a sow, and 30 or 40 geese." That was considered to be what these poor persons should have had on these little holdings which were then apportioned to them.

79. I suppose that that precedent was not generally followed in those inclosures to which you have been referring?—As time went on, the land being more valuable, there is evidence that those rights were more and more ignored, and no such provision as that was made.

80. And the rights of the labourers having been ignored in these inclosures, the class as a whole has fallen back to be a more wage-receiving class?—Yes. I might quote also from a pamphlet published in 1795 by the Rector of Barkham, Berks. The pamphlet is referred to in the Report of the Royal Commission in 1867,

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Chairman—continued.

and an extract from it runs thus: "Cottages have been progressively deprived of the little land formerly let with them, and also their rights of commonage have been swallowed up in large farms by inclosures. Thus an amazing number of people have been reduced from a comfortable state of partial independence to a precarious state as mere hirelings, who when out of work, immediately come upon the parish."

81. Now in addition to these large inclosures of commons there have been other inclosures which prejudicially affect the labouring class, have there not, of wayside land for instance?—A very great deal. It might perhaps be remarked here how progressively these people have been dealt with to their disadvantage. Roadsides upon which even in my remembrance a man might keep a cow in summer and manage to keep her through the winter (and in former times they were of course still more common) have been taken away from them. I am not contending that the legislation is bad, but I am contending that it has been detrimental to the class of peasantry who existed in those days. With regard to the actual beginning of these inclosures I may say that they go back a long time. Hallam, the historian, in his "Middle Ages," gives a good deal of information about that. He deals with the time when the common pastures were the most extensive part of a manor, and speaks of the rude abundance which the peasantry enjoyed. He states that they were far better able to provide the means of subsistence for their families than their successors are now. Of course in those days bread and animal food were extremely cheap. Wheat was 4 *s.* to 6 *s.* a quarter; oxen were 12 *s.* to 16 *s.* each; sheep were 14 *d.* to 16 *d.* each; butter, ¾ *d.* per lb.; cheese, ½ *d.* per lb.; and eggs, 25 for a penny.

82. I think Mr. Harold Rogers in his "History of Prices" has made a comparison between the condition of the agricultural labourer now and then, and having regard to these advantages which they enjoyed in previous centuries, his conclusion is that they were certainly better off than they are now?—They were far better off. Professor Thorold Rogers, who speaks from records found in cathedrals, and churches, and colleges, and information in rent-rolls of manors, and quotes the best authorities, and I think he states (I quote from memory, but I think I am right) that the peasant in those days could earn enough for himself and his family for the whole year by about four months' work.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

83. To what period do you refer?—I am referring to the middle ages, about the 15th century. Of course in that time there were positively statutes of wages to keep the wages of the peasantry down, so that they should not rise. Then if we come down later, to 1685, Macaulay, in the first volume of his history, at page 336, states that one-seventh of the whole population derived their living from small farms and land which they owned. He states that the average income of those small cultivators was small, probably not more than 50 *l.* or 70 *l.* per annum all told. He states also that it was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others, and he gives a quotation from John Ogilby, Cosmographer Royal of the day (that is 1675), that "from Abingdon to Gloucester, a distance of 40 to 50 miles, there was not a single inclosure, and scarcely one inclosure between Biggleswade and Lincoln."

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

Chairman.

84. Now, coming down to a later time, what other authorities are there?—Coming down to a later time, Mr. Cobbett, who was a very experienced agriculturist, and a keen observer in his extensive journeys throughout England, speaks frequently in his "Rural Rides" of the manner in which by inclosures the peasants have been "deprived of all share in the land," He refers to the time when the "people had so many common fields that almost every man with a family had a piece of land, large or small." He then goes on to describe in the very strong language which he was capable of using, the miserable condition of the peasant population of that day.

85. What date does that refer to?—About 1824 or 1825. His rides extended from 1821 to 1827, I think. Even at that time, in 1825 or thereabouts, when the mischief had been mainly done, he speaks of cows, geese, poultry, bees, &c. that are maintained on the wastes. "Of geese only," he says, "I have seen not less than 10,000 geese on one tract of common, six miles long, in Surrey." Then, coming still later down in visits, parishes, particularly in the south of England, one has no difficulty in getting the information from old labourers especially, who have traditional knowledge of the manner in which these inclosures had been carried on, and the manner in which this class has suffered; and there is often a great deal of bitterness connected with their complaints. Of course, the new race of labourers is not so keen about the matter, as their knowledge is mainly from hearsay.

86. You consider, I understand, that this process of appropriation of common and other rights formerly enjoyed by the peasantry has a very important bearing upon our present inquiry?—My own opinion is, that it is absolutely impossible to conduct the inquiry with a view to coming to a practical conclusion without making it what I believe to be the key of the inquiry.

87. You consider this process of appropriation has already had a very evil effect upon the peasant population?—Yes, and that opinion is supported even by the Report to which I have referred of 1867, which states that the manner in which these inclosures of wastes bears on the condition of the rural population (to use the words of the Report) "requires the fullest exposition." That Report, while admitting the benefits in some respects of these inclosures (in providing employment and in promoting the public interests) yet declares that they, together with consolidation, have been the cause, in some places of greatly diminishing and in others of entirely putting an end to advantages which the rural population formerly possessed, while the absorption of small farms into large ones has lessened their opportunities and tended to deprive

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Chairman—continued.

deprive them of the hope of rising out of the condition of day labourers into one of comparative independence."

88. I suppose that these inclosures have some compensating advantages, have they not?—Yes, I should like it to be understood that I fully admit the advantages of these inclosures; both in regard to the improvements in agricultural draining and fencing, and generally for the public good, the inclosures have been of enormous advantage. But my one point is this, that in getting these advantages one class has been deprived of what I may call their property, and it is poor consolation for a class that has been squeezed off the land, that the land may be improved.

89. Now, in the case of these Inclosure Acts, in what way do you think that the commoners were unjustly treated?—I believe that they had their rights wrongfully taken from them. I cannot say illegally because it was according to law, except in the case of illegal inclosures, to which I understand your question does not apply.

90. Quite so. We are dealing with the case of legal inclosures; I understand, however, that even in the case where the inclosure was legally conducted under an Act you think that wrong was done to the commoners?—Yes.

91. Will you explain why you think that wrong was done to the commoners?—In those cases where the process was legally carried out, and by arrangement, purchase, or otherwise, of the rights of the commoners, I contend it ought not to have been done, and I support that contention on these grounds: I contend that the commoner had no right to sell to the lord of the manor, and the lord of the manor had no right to buy out and out these common rights. The commoner had no right to sell because his interest was only for his life, and the rights belonged to his successors as much as they belonged to him; and the lord had no right to buy for the same reason. With regard to this point again, if honourable Members will read the Debate on the General Inclosure Act of 1845, they will see that that view was urged by many speakers, because the inclosures of these wastes, by buying up the rights of commoners, or by extinguishing those rights in any way, put it out of the power of all succeeding generations of peasantry to enjoy, as their forefathers had done, those rights and privileges.

92. The Report of the Royal Commission of 1867 admits, I think, your contention, that by selling their life-interests they were also extinguishing the rights of their successors?—Yes, they admit that, but the evidence of the Commissioners also is stronger on the point that the inclosures are for the public good. There is no doubt, and I do not wish to be misunderstood about this, that the object both of the Legislature and those who inclosed was mainly the public good. It was to increase the supply of food, which was increased; but the method, I contend, of doing it was fatal to the peasant class, whose rights were ignored without any advantages being substituted.

93. Your contention, as I understand, is that even if it be admitted that these inclosures were justifiable in the public good, the class who

Chairman—continued.

suffered by them is entitled to some compensation?—Yes, which compensation was not given, but the extent of which I shall refer to a little later on. The Report of 1867 states that "with regard to the disappearance of small farms it has been well remarked that while they existed the labouring man might look onward to one as the reward of his industry and good character. Since their extinction over many wide districts of the country, and the great reduction of their number everywhere, an accessible step in the social scale has been taken away from him, and a wide gap created which no exertion on his part can surmount. The possibility of rising to a better position kept him buoyant and gave him motives of self-denial. The loss of that hope is admitted to have acted in many instances with most prejudicial effect on his moral character not less than on his physical condition." I would refer honourable Members for further evidence on this subject to the Select Committee on Waste Lands in 1795; to the Select Committee on Emigration in 1827; to the Report and Evidence (particularly the Evidence) on the Allotment System in 1843; and to the Reports of the Inclosure Commissioners of 1845.

94. I understand that you contend that the old system was beneficial, not merely as assisting to promote the prosperity of a class, but also as a step in the ladder by which they were enabled to raise themselves out of that class into a higher one?—Yes, which step has been taken away. I have referred to manors, and this is interesting information which is met with in county histories upon this point. A clergyman in Norfolk sent me an extract from a history of Norfolk in 1781, with reference to the parish of Baconsthorpe. It is from an account supplied by the clergyman of the parish in 1781, and it contains the following statement: "The number of inhabited houses in the year 1780 is 31" (that is in the parish), "and the number of inhabitants is 200. The land is occupied by 22 different persons; the rents of the largest farms do not exceed 130*l.* a year, and there are some that do not exceed 20*l.* The greatest part of the land is arable; nevertheless 100 milch cows are kept in this parish. The farmers are all very industrious and frugal men, and remarkable for their skill and industry. They are attentive to their business; the generality of them sow their own corn; their wives are notable for industry, frugality, and good housewifery"; and he adds that "were all the farms in the kingdom occupied in the same manner there would be very little need of houses of industry."

95. But although the process which you have been describing began a long while ago, and is now practically ended, you consider its effects remain, and are felt very strongly at the present day?—We are suffering from it at the present day by having a discontented class, who are no longer in possession of the advantages that class formerly possessed.

96. Would you sum up the principal results which you consider to have been obtained in consequence of this process of absorption?—I should say the first result is the extent of our Poor Law relief, the rural working population

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Chairman—continued.

having been reduced to a position in which, as a class, they have no prospect but the workhouse or poor relief in some shape. Having been deprived of their lands, they have poor relief practically given them in return. The next result is that the class from which the small cultivators were recruited as they died out has gradually disappeared, and the representatives of that class who now remain are the agricultural labourers, who, being reduced to simple wage receivers, have no means and no facilities of rising into the cultivating peasant or farming class; and the third result, and a natural result, is, the migration of the population from the country to large towns and manufacturing places and centres of industry.

97. This is your answer to the second head of our reference, as I understand you, that all this legislation has most seriously affected the number of small owners and holders?—Yes.

98. This legislation, of course, was encouraged by Parliament in the past?—It was encouraged by Parliament on the ground of public good, as I stated, and no doubt Parliament was right from that point of view.

99. But in later years Parliament has begun to recognise its obligation to the class whom it was displacing?—Yes, they have recognised that the policy had another side, and therefore by their Inclosure Act of 1845, and especially by the amended Inclosure Act of 1876, Parliament has distinctly enunciated the principle that an inclosure should not in future be allowed unless it could be distinctly proved that it would be for the benefit not only of private persons but of the whole neighbourhood.

100. They recognise other and indirect interests besides those of the peasant commoners?—Yes.

101. What are the present modes of inclosure?—Setting aside the powers of inclosure by railway companies and direct Acts of Parliament of that sort, I may say there is a second method by which inclosures must now receive the sanction of the Inclosure Commissioners, that is the present Land Commissioners. These schemes must be submitted to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. But there is a third method, namely, by lords of the manor, who own the greater part of the parishes, and who can, either by purchase or consent or other means, possess themselves of the rights of all the other commoners and get the consent of the commoners to inclose, without which consent they are not able to do so. As a rule those commoners are poor and practically powerless to assert their rights in any legal way, and very often the lord has his way in some way or other, either by purchasing the rights, or by persuasion, or by giving compensation of some kind.

102. There are some notorious cases in which the efforts of the lords of the manor have been unsuccessful, are there not?—Yes, there have been.

103. In those cases, however, the commoners and the public have had the assistance of powerful corporations, have they not, as in the case of Epping Forest and other similar attempts to inclose?—Yes, often near large towns they have the assistance of outsiders who defend the rights

Chairman—continued.

in the name of the commoners. But it is fair to state on the part of lords of the manor that these cases are very rarely found in the instance of old lords of the manor who have been possessors of the commons for generations or from time immemorial; it is where the manor is sold to a new-comer, who perhaps knows nothing of the traditions of the district and who has bought the manor with the intention of making the best of it. He is not bound by any of the feelings or traditions that the original lord had; but he treats the matter as a commercial speculation, and hence those are the cases in which generally the commoners and rural population have suffered by the abolition of these common rights.

Mr. *Cobb.*

104. Are there not many cases of old owners doing the same thing?—There are cases; but the more drastic cases are those where a stranger has come and bought up the manor rights, and he immediately acts in a different way from what the old lord of the manor used to act.

Chairman.

105. Have you any suggestions to make with regard to this part of the subject?—Yes. While the matter is fresh in our minds I would advance an opinion, which I feel very strongly, that these powers possessed by the lords of the manor should be stopped by legislation; and that under no circumstances should he have power to extinguish those rights; I say that on the ground that a commoner has no right under any circumstances to sell his common rights, and the lord of the manor has no right to acquire them in any way, because by acquiring them on any grounds he not only extinguishes the right of the commoner who sells, but he extinguishes the rights of all the successors of commoners; in other words, the rights of a class.

106. But do you propose to put a stop to inclosures altogether, or under what circumstances would you allow inclosures to be made?—Perhaps you will allow me to deal with that point distinctly later on in my evidence.

107. As I understand, you consider that the result of this process has been the depopulation of the agricultural districts?—I do, and this serious result, in my opinion, is being produced still in a modified degree.

108. Can you give us any figures showing the extent of that depopulation?—I have studied very closely the census of 1881 with regard to this subject, and that of 1871 and of 1861; and I have compared the total population in those years with the total of the agricultural classes. I should explain that by agricultural classes for this purpose, I mean all persons, women and men, employed in agriculture, persons employed in fields, woods and gardens, and looking after animals. In 1861, out of a total population in England and Wales of 20,066,224, the number of the agricultural classes was 2,010,454; in 1871, out of a total population of 22,712,266, the number of the agricultural classes was 1,657,138; in the last census of 1881, out of a total population of 25,974,439, the number of the agricultural classes was 1,383,184. Therefore, according to this table, the agricultural classes have decreased

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Chairman—continued.

decreased in the decade of 1871 to 1881, about 15 per cent., while the increase in the whole country of England and Wales was 14¼ per cent. But in a subsequent volume of the Census Report the decrease of these agricultural classes is given as 8·2 per cent., and it is stated that that is the decrease when modified for the purpose of comparison. I wrote a fortnight ago to the Registrar General asking if he could send me some explanation as to which was the correct decrease, the 15 per cent. or the 8·2 per cent. He very kindly sent back the explanation, which was that there were certain persons, such as land proprietors, farmers' daughters, &c., who were included in the agricultural class in 1871, and not so included in 1881; and also that the "retired class" (that is those who had left work) were included in the one and not in the other. The actual decrease, therefore, when the figures are corrected for comparison, is 8·2 per cent. in the agricultural classes, while in the case of the general population the increase is 14¼. I think it is rather important to note that because it is so frequently said that these classes have decreased 15 per cent.; we do not want to make it out worse than it really is, and 8 per cent. is quite a sufficient decrease when we consider that the whole population has increased 14¼ per cent.

109. Does the decrease extend to every part of the country?—An analysis of the tables gives a very curious and instructive result; it shows a decrease in the general population in almost every rural district, except those in which there are large towns. I have before me the particulars which I have taken out, if the Committee would like to hear them. The Census is divided into superintendent registrars' districts. If you take Wiltshire, for instance, every superintendent registrar's district in the county decreased, except three; in Dorsetshire there is a decrease in all these districts except two (those two being Poole and Weymouth), the decrease being in some districts as high as 11 per cent. In Devonshire there is a decrease in all these districts except eight (those eight being large towns, such as Torquay and Exeter, and so forth, or the neighbourhood of large towns), the decrease being in some cases up to 11 per cent. In Cornwall there is a decrease in all these districts except Falmouth, the decrease being in some cases up to 13 per cent. In Somersetshire there is a decrease in all these districts, except five, that is five out of 17 districts; those five include Taunton, Bath, and other large towns, In Gloucestershire there is a decrease in all these districts except five, that is, five out of 17; those five include Cheltenham, Stroud, Gloucester, &c. In Herefordshire there is a decrease in every district with the exception of Hereford itself. In Buckinghamshire there is a decrease in every district except two, those two being Eton and High Wycombe. In Huntingdonshire there is a decrease in every district without exception. In Bedfordshire there is a decrease in every district except Bedford and Luton. In Cambridgeshire there is a decrease in every district except Chesterton and Cambridge. In Suffolk there is a decrease in every district except five; in some as high as 12½ per cent. In Brecknockshire there is a decrease in every district. In Radnorshire it is the same. In Norfolk there has been a decrease in 13 districts out of 22, the nine exceptions including Yarmouth, King's Lynn, and Norwich. In Lancashire there is an increase in all the 30 districts except two, namely, Liverpool and Manchester, which have decreased. In Durham there is an increase in all of the 16 districts except one. In Staffordshire there is an increase in all except one. In Lincolnshire there is a decrease in seven out of 14 districts. Then again, taken by sub-districts, the decrease is still more instructive; one would have to go a good deal into figures to get out all the detail, but the general result is, that in 14 counties, taken as a whole, the population has decreased, and those 14 counties are agricultural counties. Cornwall has decreased 9·1 per cent., Radnorshire has decreased 7·4 per cent., Huntingdon 6·4, Cardiganshire 4·4, Brecknockshire 3·6, Herefordshire 3·5, Rutland 2·9, Montgomery 2·7, Dorsetshire 2·4, Westmorland 1·3, Cambridgeshire 0·8, Pembroke 0·2, Anglesey 0·1, and Shropshire 0·05.

110. The examination of these Census Returns will show then that the population has rapidly become more urban?—Yes, I have taken out the figures in the same county for places that are rural and places that are manufacturing. As an example take Northamptonshire; Wellingborough and Kettering, which are manufacturing places, have increased by about 5,000 and 7,000, respectively, while in the same county Brackley, Towcester, Oundle, and Daventry, which are agricultural, have decreased in various ratios from 400 to 1,100. If we take old Parliamentary boroughs, we find that they have almost invariably increased in proportion, except those small boroughs that are evidently dependent upon agriculture, such as Devizes, Radnor, Shaftesbury, Tewkesbury, &c., which we know are market towns depending on agricultural industry.

111. Do you find the same results as regards houses and dwellings?—The results, as regards the inhabited houses in those districts, correspond with the decrease in the population.

112. Have you any separate returns affecting the agricultural labourers, as distinguished from other members of the agricultural classes?—Yes; the last two censuses enable us to arrive at that. Reckoning in the class of agricultural labourers, in-door farm servants, shepherds, and cottagers (not including women), the number shown by the Census of 1881 is 870,798, which is a decline of 10 per cent. in the number of this class of labourers since 1871. That is the result, after being corrected for comparison. If I might make a remark upon the general decrease, it seems to be an appalling state of things in any country.

Mr. *Hailey Stewart.*

113. Can you give us the number in 1871?—I have not the number in 1871; but in the third volume of the Census Report the figures have been corrected for comparison; and we have the authority of the Registrar General for saying that the decline is 10 per cent.

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Mr. *Llewellyn.*

114. Have you, by the side of the figures which you have given with regard to the population in these three censuses of 1861, 1871, and 1881, the acreage under cultivation at those times, so that we can see whether that has varied or not?—I have those figures, and will refer to them later on if the Committee will allow me.

Mr. *Cobb.*

115. You gave us, as the whole population of the agricultural classes, including men and women employed in agriculture, 1,383,184, and now you say that 870,798 are labourers?—Yes.

116. That leaves a very small margin for women and children, does it not?—The 1,383,000 includes only the agricultural classes; that is, persons who are employed in agriculture, and who look after horses, and so on.

Chairman.

117. Is there not some discrepancy between those figures. In order to get at the total of the agricultural population you would have to add to the total of the labourers which you have given, the farmers and their wives and families, and all other persons employed on the land who are not labourers?—Yes.

118. Assuming that there are a few hundred thousands of those you would then bring up the total agricultural classes to considerably over 2,000,000?—Yes.

119. But you have given us in your table the total of the agricultural population, as I understand, as 1,383,000 out of a total population in the United Kingdom of nearly 26,000,000; surely there must be some error in that?—That number which I gave from the Census Returns is the total of the "agricultural classes," which comprises all persons, women and men, employed in agriculture; persons employed in fields, woods and gardens, and employed in minding animals.

120. I think I understand the explanation now. The figure which you gave of 1,383,000 did not profess to represent the total of the agricultural population?—No.

121. It only represents the total of persons, whether men, women, or children, actually employed upon the land?—When I gave the numbers, I defined agricultural classes as comprising all persons, women and men, employed in agriculture, persons employed in fields, woods, and gardens, and employed about animals. Of course my comparisons about the census in various parts of the country were based upon the whole population, but that was not so with regard to the employment on the farms.

Mr. *Cobb.*

122. But you compared that figure of 1,383,184 with the total population of the country, namely, 25,974,439?—My object in doing that was merely to show that while the total population increased from 20,000,000 to 25,000,000, these classes decreased; I merely gave the figures for information.

Chairman.

123. The term agricultural classes has a special meaning for the purpose of this comparison; it does not mean all the agricultural population, but only the persons employed in agriculture as you have defined them?—Quite so.

124. Now as regards the reduction in the class of labourers, to what do you attribute that; do you regard it as a voluntary change of life on the part of these people?—I have paid a great deal of attention to that as to the moving about of labourers, and I find they rarely move willingly; they are rather driven away by their hard circumstances. As the general result of my inquiry, I may say that they would like to remain upon the land if they could do so upon anything like fair and comfortable conditions. And further, I have known from my own experience men give up tolerably comfortable situations in towns in order to go back to the land on account of their preference for that employment.

125. Have those persons been compensated for the loss of their rights or privileges?—In the case of inclosures under the Act of 1845 and the amending Acts, it is supposed that they have received compensation for the rights of which they have been deprived; but no adequate compensation has been given. In many cases the cottagers have received money compensation, but in the majority of cases there has been no compensation. For instance, if a cottager was a tenant in any form and not a freeholder the compensation would follow the tenement, which means that the landlord would have the compensation instead of the tenant. I might quote here the evidence of a witness before the Inclosure Commission of 1844; I will not trouble the Committee with a long extract from that Report, but one witness says (I quote his own words), that he "regrets that in the case of occupying tenants having the privilege of putting stock on a common and having the whole use and enjoyment of the common right, after the inclosure the landlord should have the power of dispossessing him, and it constantly happens that landlords do take from the cottagers the allotments that have been so set out, and either build on them or get several of them laid together and convert them into a little field." I might refer also to the debate on the Inclosure Bill of 1844. Mr. Hume then stated that "by means of Inclosure Bills small portions of land had been allotted to poor parties having rights of common, but the result had been in many, he might say in most, cases to take from the poor and give additional portions to the neighbouring squire, for large numbers who had got their allotments were not able to bring them into cultivation, and they sold them to some neighbouring landowner." Lord Sandon in that debate also pointed out that "the portion allotted to the poor man who had a right of common would probably soon be absorbed by his rich neighbour."

126. But the Inclosure Acts do provide some kind of compensation, do they not?—Yes, the Acts of 1845 and 1876 provide compensation in the discretion of the Inclosure Commissioners, or rather the Land Commissioners, and small lots and allotments for recreation grounds and so on, have been provided under the various Inclosure Acts.

127. The

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Chairman—continued.

127. The quantity of land so provided has not been large, however, has it?—No, I refer to the awards as being valuable as a recognition by the Legislature of the rights of the class, but the character and extent of those awards show how completely the class have been deprived of their status as cultivating owners and occupiers. If honourable Members will refer to the Report of the Royal Commission of 1867, they will find that the Report summarises the various allotments which had been set aside as compensation under the various Inclosure Acts, as shown by the Reports of the Inclosure Commissioners since 1845. The area inclosed from 1845 to 1867 was 484,893 acres. Of this amount only 2,119 acres were assigned to the labouring poor, no matter what prescriptive rights they had in the land.

128. That is only about two-fifths per cent., is it not?—Yes; the rest was assigned to lords of the manor and other claimants. I might say that the Commissioners have no power to give any compensation where the common rights are stinted, that is where they are limited. Now if we look back to the old histories we find that the stint of common applied to the landowner, to the big man as well as to the little one. The object of the stint, so far as I can make out, was to arrange so that one man should not have more use of the common than another; it was really for the protection of the poorer commoner, so that the man who had only half-a-dozen cattle should not have the pasture occupied unduly by a man who had 100 head of cattle. That is my reading of the history of this question; but the Inclosure Acts seem to take an opposite view, and to say that where a man has got stinted rights of pasture he is therefore to have no compensation at all.

129. What reasons besides the "stinted" rights do the Commissioners give for not awarding more land to the commoners?—They give a variety of reasons why more land was not set apart; some of the reasons are that the land was unsuitable, that it was too far distant, that the poor have already got gardens, &c., &c.

130. Practically, however, your conclusion is that although the theory of compensation has been maintained, no adequate compensation has actually been given?—Quite so; and the principal point is that whether compensation has been given or not, the rights and privileges of the class have been extinguished.

131. This is partly due, I suppose, to the character of the class, and their inability to be sufficiently represented before the Commissioners?—Yes, their inability to be represented before the Commissioners. On the debate on the Inclosure Bill of 1844 (which will be found in "Hansard," vol. 75, page 301), Mr. Aglionby states, "Every one knows how these Committees (that is Committees on Inclosure Bills) were generally conducted. They were attended only by honourable Members who were interested in them, being lords of the manor; and the rights of the poor, though they might be talked about, had frequently been taken away under that system." The Earl of Lincoln, who seems to have taken a very advanced view upon this question in the debate on the Inclosure Bill of 1845, refers to the impossibility of the rural

Chairman—continued.

population, on account of poverty, coming to London to employ counsel to urge their rights before the Committees of the House, and he says (to use his own words), "This I know; that in 19 cases out of 20 Committees of this House sitting on private Inclosure Bills, neglect the rights of the poor." Then on the second reading of the previous Bill in the year 1844 (this will be found in "Hansard," vol. 73, page 976), Sir Robert Peel said, "As to the actual right, the House must be cautious how they dealt lightly with those rights. It might be a matter of feeling, and the poorer classes of the community had their feelings on the subject. The right of common connected with the soil, the right of turning a goose on a common, made a man feel interested in the tenure of land. It might be more beneficial to a tenant to accept 2 *l.* or 3 *l.*, but recollect you are not dealing with the rights of the individual, but with those of his successors."

132. From all these facts that you have laid before us, what do you conclude?—I conclude that as far as the first and second parts of the inquiry go, there has been a large diminution of small holdings or small holders, and in the number of small cultivators; that is to say, a very large diminution, amounting almost to an extinction of the class of small cultivators; and that result has been brought about by legislation. If we take the diminution relatively to the population, that diminution is enormous, for in 1801 the population of England and Wales was about 9,000,000, while now it is just under 26,000,000.

133. This legislation has been dictated, has it not, in the main, by a belief that larger results could be obtained from the land under the new or improved system?—That is so.

134. Is it your opinion that that argument justifies the change?—I have two remarks to make upon that point. It was held, and conscientiously held, that large farms would yield more and could be cultivated more cheaply. I do not admit that myself, but supposing that were so, supposing it could be shown, for instance, that a single farmer or a company could farm half a county with machinery and a handful of wage-paid labourers, I think the State should discourage or even prevent such a system. It would be a rich and rotten state of things on this ground, that it is a condition of national safety and national strength for a country to have a strong, numerous, and prosperous peasantry.

135. You do not think that the question is to be decided alone upon considerations of the produce of the land?—No, I think the social question, as distinct from the economic one, is a question primarily worthy the consideration of this Committee and Parliament, although I hope to be able to prove that the economic argument is also in the direction of these smaller farms.

136. I understand you to say that even if it were proved that more produce was obtained by the system of large holdings, you would still be opposed to them on the ground that they destroyed a strong peasantry, which is necessary to the security and the prosperity of the country, but I also understand you to say that you do not

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Chairman— continued.

believe that the production is larger?—That is so.

137. How do you maintain that second proposition, that the production from small holdings would not be less than the production from large ones?—Before coming to that I would like to say that there is not wanting evidence that a small farm well tilled is more productive of even corn than many large farms farmed with deficient capital. But it is not a question of growing corn only that we have to consider, but it is a question of producing more abundantly those smaller articles of food for which we are now so largely dependent on other countries for a supply.

138. I think you have examined very carefully the agricultural returns?—Yes.

139. And you have come to the conclusion that while even in corn the small holdings do not compare unfavourably with the large, they compare most favourably in regard to horses, cows, sheep, and pigs?—Yes, as regards stock generally.

140. And you believe that they would also compare favourably with regard to the smaller articles of production, such as butter, eggs, poultry, &c.?—Yes.

141. Have you prepared a table abstracted from the agricultural returns showing those results?—I have.

142. Will you put in that table?—I have two tables which I will hand in. I should like to explain the character of these tables, if I might do so, in a few words. I take, first of all, the number of holdings, and the amount of acreage, and the list of stock throughout the whole of Great Britain. That will be shown in the first table; then if you analyse that table, and take the number of holdings from one acre to 50 acres, you have 4,871,031 acres, as shown in the second table. If you next take the number of holdings from 50 acres to 100 acres, you have about the same area of land; that is to say, you have 4,746,520 acres of land. Now, if you take the amount of stock (in which I include horses in one column, cows and other cattle in a second, sheep and lambs in a third, and pigs in a fourth), you will find that there is a larger amount kept on the smaller holdings than on the larger ones.

143. For the same total area?—For the same total area.

144. That applies, as I understand, to the comparison between the holdings of from one to 50 acres, and from 50 to 100 acres?—Yes.

145. Putting them both together, and contrasting them with the holdings of 300 acres and upwards, you show, I think, on this table the same result?—Yes.

146. Namely, that a much larger amount of stock is kept upon the same area in the smaller holdings than in the case of the larger ones?—Yes, although the area of land is about the same. Then, if you compare holdings of 100 acres to 300 acres, and calculate the same proportion of stock which would be found upon the same area if it were divided into holdings of 100 acres and downwards, you will find that there is far less stock kept per acre on the larger holdings than would be kept on the same area if divided into smaller holdings. Shortly explained, the result of that table is this, that if the same

Chairman—continued.

proportion of stock were kept on holdings of from 100 acres to 300 acres, as is kept on holdings of from one to 100 acres, the number of horses should be 725,757, instead of 581,198, as appears in the tables; that is to say, there is shown to be a deficiency on the larger farms as regards horses of 144,559 horses; in the same way, the number of cows and other cattle should be 3,778,034, instead of 2,671,021; the number of sheep and lambs should be 11,122,848, instead of 9,498,367, and in the same way the number of pigs should be 1,673,662, instead of 808,230. This calculation therefore shows, as I said, an enormous excess in the production of land cultivated in small holdings of from one to 100 acres over the same area of land cultivated in large farms of 100 to 300 acres.

147. With that short explanation you hand in these tables. The further development of your argument upon that point I will leave till we come to it in the ordinary course of your evidence?—Quite so. (*The Tables were handed in.*)

Mr. *Cobb.*

148. Do I rightly understand that your table will enable us to compare holdings up to 50 acres with holdings, say above 200 acres?—Yes.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

149. Do you find the same principle to obtain throughout whatever size the holding is?—Yes, all throughout. Perhaps I might add that I have another table which I have taken out, showing the figures for different size of holdings in two corn-growing counties, and also in two mixed counties. I have selected Lincoln and Norfolk as representing the corn growing, and Devon and Somerset as representing the mixed counties. I have prepared that table in order that it might be seen that the smaller farms are equal in proportion in the corn-growing counties to what they are in the mixed counties, thereby destroying, as I think, any answer that might be made to the effect that the explanation of the results shown in the former tables was that there is more corn grown on the larger holdings than on the smaller holdings. (*The Table was handed in.*)

150. I believe you are of opinion that the same result would be shown if you were able to compare the smaller articles of food-production?—Yes; I would like the Committee to understand, when they come to look at the table that I have handed in, that the production of the smaller articles of food, such as butter, cheese, fruit, vegetables, and so forth, is to be credited to the small farms. Seeing that those articles are mainly produced on the smaller farms, they are to be still further credited, in addition to stock, to the productive powers of these smaller farms, which will make the force of my contention still more apparent.

151. At the present time the country is dependent for its smaller articles of food-production very largely upon its imports, is it not?—Yes, I have before me the figures showing the quantities and values of some of these smaller articles of food imported in the year 1886. I will hand in the table, but perhaps I might give the values in pounds sterling of some of the articles imported.

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

imported. The value of the cheese imported was 3,871,359 *l.*; of butter, 8,141,438 *l.*; of margarine, 2,962,264 *l.*; of lard, 1,544,632 *l.*; of poultry, game, and rabbits, 639,704 *l.*; of bacon, 6,159,184 *l.*; of hams, 2,243,644 *l.*; of fresh pork, 200,293 *l.*; salted pork, 431,245 *l.*; of potatoes, 799,265 *l.*; of onions, 506,710 *l.*; apples, 857,095 *l.*; and of eggs, 2,844,063 *l.*; the number of eggs imported every day throughout the year, including Sundays, being above 2¾ millions. (*The Table was handed in.*)

152. The total of those imports amounts, roughly, to nearly 30,000,000 *l.* sterling?—Yes, about 30,000,000 *l.* sterling. I may add that these are all articles at paying prices.

153. They are articles which you consider particularly suitable to small cultivation?—Yes; and if they were produced at home it is evident that it would give a great impetus to agriculture, mostly on small holdings, and consequent advantages would accrue to our industrial centres.

154. These imports are often neglected in discussions on agricultural depression, are they not?—Yes; if they are alluded to at all, it is very inadequately; and there is no effort to explain them at all by our large agricultural societies. These smaller articles of food seem to be beneath the notice of the large agriculturist or of agricultural societies.

155. You have already said, I think, that you consider that they are specially fitted for small cultivation?—Yes; a large farmer is not so well fitted by habit and education to produce them.

156. Are those articles imported from countries which have already got a system of small holdings?—Yes; for instance, the butter is brought very largely from Denmark; and, of course, from Belgium we get a very large amount of produce, and also from Holland and France; and, indeed, I might say that, with the exception of cheese from America, nearly the whole of these products come from countries where there is a system of peasant proprietary, or small cultivators.

Chairman.

157. Then your argument is, that it would be advisable to multiply small holdings as a means of increasing the production of the country?—Yes.

158. And thus enabling the country to be more self-supporting than it is at present?—Yes. It requires a different system; a more intensive system of cultivation to produce these smaller articles. It requires a great deal of personal work, and close personal attention on the part of the cultivator, which a large farmer sometimes does not feel inclined to give; and it is very difficult for him to produce the same results by means of hired labour alone.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

159. Have you any returns showing the amount of garden produce, such as cabbages, imported into England?—No; that is left out of the return; the return only gives potatoes, of which there were three-quarters of a million sterling imported in 1886.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

160. You have not included fruit and vegetables in your return?—No.

Chairman.

161. In considering remedies for the state of things to which you object, have you considered the proposal which is associated with some politicians of your acquaintance, and which took the form of a restitution Bill, in which it was proposed that inclosures should be restored to their former uses?—Yes. A few years ago I paid great attention to that and made numberless inquiries; in fact I was preparing a Bill for the restoration of these inclosures, but I found the further I went on the greater the difficulties. I found first of all that the inclosures comprised two classes of land; first, land in the hands of the original inclosers; and, secondly, land in the hands of those who had bought it from the original inclosers for value innocently. Much of this land was made the subject of marriage settlements, for instance, and all such cases were difficult to deal with, without great injury to persons who were themselves innocent of having appropriated the land. But I found further, on fuller inquiry, that there was a third class, and by far the most numerous class, so far as numbers were concerned, namely, the squatters, and other small cultivators who either inherited land or had bought land originally illegal inclosures, or who had in many cases themselves illegally inclosed it. I found those cases were very numerous indeed.

162. In fact, if you had succeeded in carrying your Bill you would have done a good deal to destroy the object which you referred to as your principal object, namely, the multiplication of small owners?—I am sorry to say that I was obliged to come to that conclusion; but beyond that I found it would inflict positive ruin in many cases, that I know of and have visited personally, where, although the holders may have no real title, their title is accepted in the localities amongst themselves, custom having made that title sufficient. I found that to have passed a restoration Bill would destroy the value of all that property, and make the property of those small men unsaleable; it would in fact ruin the owners by making sales almost impossible for want of buyers, as the buyers would only be large and wealthy men who could afford to stand the risk attaching to a purchase with such a title.

163. You came to the conclusion that though wrong had been done, the holders of the land must be regarded as having acquired prescriptive rights in the general interests of the community?—If the restoration could have been carried out, and you could have laid hold of the original offenders, I do not know that I should have regarded length of time, but I found that where you would interfere with one large landowner who had inclosed, you would interfere with 100 of these smaller men, whese inclosures were really their property, and all they had. I may take a typical case, if you will allow me, that I know myself: An old man, who is still living (I speak of a time about 12 months ago), bought

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Chairman—continued.

four or five acres of land about 50 years ago, and built a cottage upon it.

164. Where was that?—It is in the south of England; I have no right to give his name, but I can guarantee the facts of the case. It was inclosed from the forest nearly 100 years ago; it had been an illegal inclosure; it had been what the lord of the manor called "set," and not "granted;" that is to say, there was a small annual sum of 10*s.* paid as quit-rent which is paid to this day; this man improved that piece of land, and sold it for a great deal more than he paid for it, and, at present, he occupies another inclosure which he bought from a squatter near, with no better title than the piece he had sold, which he has so much improved that he now wants 1,000*l.* for it; this he will leave to his wife and children; but a Bill of the kind that I describe would make his property worth nothing at all. In a communication from the district where these inclosures took place, a gentleman, whose name I am not at liberty to give without his permission, but who takes much interest in these matters, told me (to use his own words) that "The passing of such a Bill would be the signal for a raid on squatters and small copyholders, of whom there are very large numbers; there would be an insecurity and fall in value of all such properties." The further I inquired the more these difficulties became apparent, and it became certain that a Bill of that sort would, as you have described, destroy the very object which I had at heart.

165. You do not think, therefore, that any improvement at all can be looked for by such a Bill as that?—Not in that direction. I may say also that at the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, of which I was a member, one very important witness spoke of this class, the squatters, in his district as being "excellent and industrious workers, small freeholders, living by their thrift and ability, dwellers on no man's land, well principled and moral, thrifty and industrious," and he said he would "like to see the number increased." In the face of all this evidence I have not proceeded further with a restoration Bill.

166. Now I think we come to the third head of the reference to this Committee as to the facilities which exist already for the creation of small holdings; what have you to say upon that point?—With the exception of private efforts on the part of landowners and others, and such undertakings as that of the Small Farm and Labourer's Company, of which Lord Wantage is the head, I am not aware of any facilities that are being given.

167. Do you think that the requirements of the case can be met by private philanthropy or companies of the kind that you refer to?—I do not. The operation of companies must of necessity be limited; they must look for a profit upon their capital, and cannot advance money as cheaply as the State or local authorities, while what we really want are facilities in every locality where any legitimate demand for land may exist.

168. Any such companies must be very widely spread, and be very numerous in order to meet your requirements?—Yes; I may say that I have

Chairman—continued.

visited the Lambourne Estate, but it was at the beginning of the undertaking, so that I only know the results from the reports which I have in my hand, but I understand that they are satisfactory.

169. One difficulty I imagine in the way of companies undertaking this thing as a profitable investment, is the want of any very large class capable at the present moment of taking advantage of the facilities; is not that so?—Yes, that is so, and that difficulty is increased by the companies acting, as companies must act, in one particular locality to which the men must therefore migrate. What we want is a self-acting plan which shall provide land in the localities in which there are already men who are either partially employed in other occupations, and want land to work upon in their spare time, or who are ready to take land as their full occupation.

170. I understand your view to be that unless there are facilities in every parish you cannot meet such demand as at present exists; and that as a company could not possibly commence operations in a great number of parishes at once, it would only at the best deal with a very limited demand?—A very limited demand.

171. That points therefore to the necessity, if anything is to be done, of doing it by means of local authorities?—Yes.

172. That brings us, I think, to the fourth head of the inquiry, whether facilities for the creation of small holdings can be extended in connection with an improved system of local government?—Yes.

173. Now in your opinion would any legislation for this purpose act best through the State or through the local authorities?—Through the local authorities, certainly.

174. Why do you object to operations directly superintended by the State?—Because local authorities can best understand the requirements of a locality, and could carry out the work without any risk, and without any excessive official expenses. They would be, as it were, on the spot, and would be able to examine the needs of the locality, and better able to supply them than any central authority could possibly do.

175. Of course the precedent in the case of allotments is in favour of dealing with such facilities by means of local authorities?—That is so.

176. Now have you any information with regard to the plans adopted for this purpose by foreign countries?—Yes. There have been several systems favouring, and some practically creating, a system of small cultivating ownership. There is, for instance, the land legislation of Prussia (I do not know whether honourable Members are acquainted with it) to which I might shortly allude. The legislation I refer to began at the beginning of the present century. The land then was held by feudal landlords, and by men who were called peasant farmers, but who were subject to feudal service and obligations of a very onerous character, which interfered largely with their prosperity. As a result of the Prussian land legislation, these peasant proprietors were relieved from all these feudal obligations and liabilities, and they became owners

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Chairman—continued.

owners and cultivators of their farms. Before the Reform these peasants had heavy and continuous service and feudal duties which they had to render to the landlord who, however, it is fair to say, had also duties which he was compelled to exercise with regard to the peasants, such as providing them dwellings, helping them in sickness, emergency, &c. The law of the land nominally prevented the landlord from taking peasant land, and if a peasant died the landlord had to replace him in his holding with another of the same class, a law which, according to the reports, was often violated. The Prussian Government, it can be seen through all this legislation, sided largely with the peasant class, and recognised them as an important element in the State. This legislation was not sudden and sweeping, but it extended over a number of years from 1807 to 1850. That of 1807 did not create peasant proprietors, but simply did away with legal distinctions between feudal or landlord's land and peasant land. The laws of 1811 and 1821 created an independent ownership; compensation was given, the peasants surrendering a portion of their lands, and becoming absolute owners of the remainder free from service, and all feudal duties; they had the option of doing this, or of paying a capitalised amount in a lump sum or in yearly payments. A Commission was appointed for each province to carry out these laws. The next and most important law was that of 1850 which consolidated the preceding ones, and created what we know as the Provincial Rent Banks of Prussia. The principle of these banks was that the bank paid the landlord in debentures issued in various amounts, varying from about 2 *l.* to 150 *l.*, at four per cent., and guaranteed by the State. The bank pays the landlord in the form of these debentures up to 20 years' purchase (the amount at which the peasant redeems his fixed rent). The bank receives in the form of rent from the peasant an amount equal to five per cent. on the value of the debentures advanced. Four per cent. of this is applied to the payment of interest on debentures, and the remaining one per cent. is put to a sinking fund, which redeems the debentures in 41 years and one month, when the peasant owner ceases payment altogether. Or, instead of doing that, the peasant may pay the bank 4½ per cent. upon the advance instead of five per cent, and so extinguish the principal in 50 years instead of 41 years; or he may at any time, with six months' notice pay the whole debt to the bank at once. These rents are a first charge upon the land, and are collected by the tax collectors. I may say they are collected monthly, while the interest is paid half-yearly, which is in favour of the bank. These land banks were gradually introduced throughout Germany, and were used at length also in some parts to advance money for other operations, such as draining and so on. The operations of these land banks up to the beginning of 1867 went to the extent of from 10 to 12 millions of debentures. The standard work on this subject is that of Dr. Litte, who was the president of the Appeal Court for Land Legislation. That work was published some years ago in Berlin, I think.

Chairman—continued.

177. Was this legislation compulsory?—Yes, it was compulsory. The law of 1807 was compulsory, so far that all forced personal service on the part of the peasants was to be abolished within two or three years of the date, and that without compensation, it being held that a man should not be compelled to pay for being made free from serfdom. The abolition of the distinction between lords' land and peasants' land was also compulsory. This and subsequent legislation provided for the gradual re arrangement of the tenure on the principle of reciprocal commutation. The rights and obligations of the peasant and those of the lord were assessed, and the balance allowed to be paid by the peasant by a transfer of a portion of his land. The process seems to have been slow on account of various difficulties, and hence the law of 1850, which consolidated previous Acts, and established the land banks, to enable the peasants by loans to pay off their obligations to the lords in money, they, the peasants, repaying the banks principal and interest by an annual sum for a certain number of years.

178. The principle is really the same is it not, as the principle which is known here as that of the Ashbourne Act?—Yes; except that the State was operating through the land banks and not direct, they were secured by the State.

179. And in the end the security of the State came in, as it does with us?—Yes.

180. The terms to the tenants were not as favourable as the terms of the Ashbourne Act?—No; the debentures ranked as State Securities, and sold in the market as equal to them in every way.

181. Have you anything to say with regard to the results of this legislation?—The results economically and socially are very striking. At the time of the commencement of that legislation, there was a remarkable amount of opposition and discontent in the country, which gradually disappeared as this legislation operated. I might say that there was the same strong opposition to this legislation on the part of a certain class in Prussia, the landlord class, as we find in England, to proposals which we make for the creation of a peasant proprietary. The arguments were precisely the same. There were the same arguments in favour of large farms and plenty of capital as being the best conditions for cultivation; there were the same contentions as to the labouring classes having no capital, and not being able to succeed for want of it and so forth. If honourable Members wish to see the results economic, social, and moral, treated of, they will find a good deal of information in Professor Seeley's Life of Stein.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

182. Is this legislation to which you have been referring, what is known as the Stein and Hardenberg legislation?—Yes, but it extended long after the time of Stein and Hardenberg. It began in 1807 and ended in 1850.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

183. As I understand the case you refer to is a case in which the State has interfered to preserve a system of small holdings already existing?—

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

existing?—Yes, I refer to the Prussian legislation for that reason, and to show that the Prussian Government took the opposite principle to that which we adopted; they took the principle of rooting the peasantry on the soil, while our principle of action was to buy them out, or to squeeze them out, or to get them off the soil in some way. The two principles were precisely opposed to each other. If we read the history of the time we see that Stein and Hardenberg and those of their school always contended that the peasantry must be rooted on the land, and that their privileges must not be curtailed or destroyed. They declared boldly that the State has a duty to support and strengthen this class, and they fought that principle against the economic school of the day, and I think the result has shown that Stein and Hardenberg's views were not only Statesmanlike, but economically sound, and that the opposition at that time, which was a very bitter one, was founded on wrong principles.

184. Was there any attempt in this legislation to cut up large holdings into small holdings for sale?—No; they dealt with the peasants as they found them, precisely as we had the opportunity of doing during the past century. If similar legislation had taken place in England in dealing with the case of a commoner who had, say four acres of land and common rights, the Legislature would have said to the landlord, We estimate this commoner's land and common rights at so much, and we instal him for ever on your domain as a farmer of perhaps 30 or 40 acres, according to what those rights might be estimated at; they would not allow a lord of the manor to buy out the man.

Chairman.

185. The time, as I understand you, for applying such legislation to this country, has gone by, in your opinion?—I think it is too late. There is a different state of things in England now. We are not considering the means of a wholesale preservation of small holders, but of granting facilities and inducements for the gradual restoration of that class as a supplement to our present system.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

186. So far as Wales is concerned, would you not say that there we have also to consider the principle of the preservation of small holdings which still exist there?—In the case of Wales there are a larger number no doubt, and I should think there it would be absolutely beneficial if we could adopt legislation of this class, but unfortunately one of the Assistant Commissioners (I forget his name for the moment), is somewhat unfavourable to these small holdings in Wales, and represents the holders to be in a state of very great hardship and not at all desirable; but if you turn to the evidence in Wales on which that opinion is founded, you will find that the evidence over and over again given that the Welsh holder while having a hard life is an industrious and careful man, of superior education and possessing qualities that really lead us to quite another conclusion to what the Assistant Commissioner has arrived at.

Chairman.

187. We are getting a little wide of our present point. The point we are now upon is, that whether there be small holders in Wales in any number or not, the object, generally is, rather to re-create a class than to establish an existing class upon the land?—Exactly; it is to give facilities for the re-creation of a class of small cultivators.

188. You would be ready to do anything to make permanent those who already exist, but you also desire (and this is your special point) to re-create a class of this kind which has almost been extinguished in many parts of the country?—Yes.

189. Therefore, as I understand, Stein's legislation would not be applicable to this country, except in the limited number of cases of those owners already existing?—Quite so; I mention the case of that legislation because the result has been good in Prussia and Germany, and the result of the opposite legislation has been bad in England; and had it not been for the rapid increase of trade and commerce, during the present century, especially since 1846, which absorbed and employed the dispossessed class, if I may so term them, and their descendants, we should have had agrarian troubles of a very grievous description.

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Tuesday, 9th April 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Cobb.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir William Hart-Dyke.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. ARTHUR ARNOLD, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

190. I THINK that you are President of the Free Land League?—I am. It is an association including nearly 100 Members of both Houses of Parliament.

191. Will you just explain what the objects of the association are?—The objects of the association are (1), the abolition of the law of primogeniture; (2), abolition of copyhold and customary tenure and obsolete manorial rights; (3), prohibition of settlement of land upon unborn persons, and of the general power of creating life estates in land; (4), conveyance by registration of title; all interests in the property registered to be recorded; (5), provision for the sale of encumbered settled property; (6), preservation of commons and of popular rights over land and water, and restoration of any illegally taken away in recent times; (7), enfranchisement of long leaseholds; (8), amendment of the law of landlord and tenant calculated to promote and further to protect improvements; (9), to promote the acquirement of land by the people for residence and cultivation, both by the general laws and by the instrumentality of municipalities and other local bodies.

192. You have given a good deal of attention to the subject of the reference to this Committee?—I have for many years, I may say, both practically, officially, and politically.

193. We will begin with the first head of reference, namely, the facilities which exist for the creation of small holdings in land in Great Britain?—It would be convenient perhaps, if I were at once to say that I understand by small holdings, without fixing rigid limits, an extent of land, varying from one perhaps to 20 acres, of which the possessor is either the owner to the fullest extent which the laws of the State permit, or the tenant, and from which he either obtains the sustenance and maintenance of his family, or uses the land as an assistance to him in some other occupation. With regard to the facilities which exist, I would like to speak first of the

Chairman—continued.

main hindrance which is caused to the creation of small holdings, by the accumulation of land in large estates in this country.

194. You are now speaking of the accumulation of ownership, I understand?—Of the accumulation of ownership.

195. Not of the accumulation of tenancy which is caused by the consolidation of large farms?—I am speaking now of the accumulation of land in large estates as the main hindrance to the creation of small holdings, that accumulation being fostered and protected by the practices of primogeniture and settlement.

196. Have you any figures showing to what extent this accumulation has gone on?—I take the figures from Lord Derby's Return of 1874-5, known as the New Domesday Book. That shows the total area of land and water in the United Kingdom as amounting to 72,117,766 acres. Of that the extent of cultivated land under crops, bare fallow, and grass, amounted to 47,900,000 acres. From that Return I have extracted the following information: 525 Peers hold 15,303,165 acres in 1,593 estates, exclusive of their property in the Metropolitan area, in forests and woods (except saleable underwoods), and in commons and waste lands. I think the property of the nobles amounts to about one-fourth in extent and one-eighth of the estimated rental of the United Kingdom. In 4-5ths of the United Kingdom there is no estate less than 1,000 acres in area. The following are the figures of the number of owners of 1,000 acres and upwards, and total extent in acres of their estates. In England and Wales the estates number 5,408, and the extent in acres is 18,695,528 acres; in Scotland there are 1,758 owners of 1,000 acres and upwards, and the total extent in acres is 17,584,828 acres; in Ireland there are 3,745 owners of 1,000 acres and upwards, the total extent in acres being 15,802,739 acres, making a total of 10,911 estates, and 52,083,095 acres, that extent being about 4-5ths

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Chairman—continued.

of the total extent of the United Kingdom. This area of more than 52 millions includes, as I say, no estate of less than 1,000 acres. Then there is a deduction to be made from that for errors in the Return, for the Return is full of errors; for example, the Duke of Buccleuch, who owns land in 14 counties, is counted as 14 landowners throughout that Return. Therefore, making a reasonable deduction for such errors as that, and allowing for plural ownership, I think it would be fair to say that 4-5ths of the soil of the United Kingdom is shown by Lord Derby's Return to be in the hands of 7,000 persons. This accumulation, which is the prime hindrance to the creation of small holdings, has been promoted by the practices of primogeniture and settlement.

197. Will you explain how that is?—The effect of settlement, even under the Settled Land Act, is to place all this large extent of land under two disabilities, one, that a limited owner cannot appropriate to his own uses the proceeds of the sale; and another, that the assignee in bankruptcy would have over that immense extent of land no powers of sale. I further explain it by the fact that the amenities and enjoyments of large estates are inconsistent with a great number of small holdings. The enjoyment of sport, the pleasures of the country generally, the ease and convenience in the collection of rent, and so on, would all be interfered with. And I may say, that in no country in the world has it been found that large estates could co-exist with small holdings.

198. Do you consider that those influences which have operated in the past against the creation of small holdings are still in operation?—Yes; with the fullest force.

199. Are the temptations to settlement, and to the accumulation of large estates, and the amenities connected with those estates as great as they were?—In the general run of instances, yes. For example, it has been proposed to have an improvement of transfer; but an improvement of transfer, such as has been many times proposed, without the abolition of these practices, must favour such accumulation. That matter has never been put more clearly than it was put two years ago by the present Prime Minister in speaking upon Lord Halsbury's Land Transfer Bill. Lord Salisbury then said, "If the tendency of land is to mass and to get into aggregation, the more easy you make the transfer of land from one man to another the more that tendency will work." I think those words express the absolute truth.

200. But even if the practices of primogeniture and settlement were prohibited, would not the same result obtain, that is to say, that the tendency of all transfer would be to the absorption of small estates and the continued accumulation of large ones?—Many of the large estates would become, of necessity, broken up; but I may point out also there is the disability over these 52,000,000 acres of land (assuming, as I do assume, that this is generally settled land), that we cannot have simplicity of title.

201. Before you come to that further point I want to get from you your opinion as to whether

Chairman—continued.

the abolition of the practices of primogeniture and settlement by themselves would lead to a large creation of small holdings?—When land could not be set apart as it may now for 50 or 60 or 70 years, there would be less desire to accumulate; and while land is so accumulated, there will always be a hindrance to small holdings, because the ownership of small holdings is in contradiction to the pleasures of great landownership.

202. I understand that the abolition of these practices would bring more land into the market?—Immensely.

203. And that it would cheapen the transfer of land?—It is impossible to have an easy transfer of land all over the kingdom without the abolition of these practices.

204. Therefore their abolition is a necessary precedent, at all events, to the creation of small holdings which cannot be created unless there is a full supply of land available, and unless the transfer of land is cheapened?—I have shown by the figures I quoted that the supply of land must necessarily be very limited unless these practices are abolished.

205. But even if there were a larger supply of land in the market, and even if the cost of transfer were cheapened, do you not think there would still be a tendency for all this land to be absorbed by large capitalists who could afford to pay a better price, rather than by persons who were desirous of becoming small owners?—It would operate to some extent in that way; but under reformed laws, land would be purchased by those who can make the best economic use of it. We do not for instance find in France that there is any disposition to establish large estates, because those who can make the best economic use of the land are the best purchasers, and so they obtain it. Under good laws the same practice would obtain in this country.

206. Do you think that small holders would be able to pay a better price than large ones?—Undoubtedly, because they could make a more profitable use of the land.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

207. In reply to the Chairman, I understood you to say you do not consider that there have been any forces acting upon society at the present time, which have resulted in greater ease in the acquisition of small holdings; that is to say that you regard all the forces which have made for the accumulation of property in large holdings as still abiding; do you not consider that the extension of the franchise under the protection of the ballot has removed from the large landowners one of the great inducements to increase ownership and to hold land to such a large extent?—That may be so; but the statistics of the recent sales of land would show 10,000 acres of large property as compared with one of small. For instance, there was recently a sale of, I think, 37,000 acres of land in Yorkshire to a single purchaser (I refer to Mr. Cunliffe Lister). That would largely out-weigh the small sales of land that have taken place within the last year or two.

208. You consider that there has been this disintegrating tendency?—There are many dis-

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

integrating tendencies. That is one; the economic conditions form another.

Chairman.

209. Then I think you say, in addition to the tendency to accumulation caused by this legislation, these practices are also a great hindrance to the simplicity of title?—That is so; I may illustrate that by the most recent change in the law of limitation which came into operation on the 1st of January 1879. Since that time upon what I call free land (that is land upon which no settlement or other restriction exists), there is no right of action for the recovery of rent or possession after 12 years. But on settled land the right ceases six years after the estate falls in; so that if a life tenant holds for 60 years, a claim can be made in 66 years time from the commencement. Under those conditions it is impossible to have simplicity of title upon these 52,000,000 acres of settled land.

210. The recent legislation, which was intended to facilitate the sale of estates, does not, I gather in your opinion, go far enough?—Certainly not.

211. Would you point out the particulars in which it is still deficient?—The only facilitating statute to which I could make reference is the Glebe Lands Act of last Session, 1888.

212. I want you to deal first with Lord Cairns' legislation, because the Glebe Lands Act applies only to a particular class of land; whereas the other Act is a general Act, and it is that Act which, as I understand, you consider to be entirely inadequate for the purpose of preventing this accumulation of land?—Yes. The words I have quoted from the speech of the Prime Minister, and which I adopted, would tend to show in my judgment that an improved transfer without the abolition of these practices might accelerate and continue the accumulation of land. Therefore any Land Transfer Bill would be in my judgment faulty, which did not as a preliminary simplify the title to land by dealing with this question of settlement. Am I to understand you desire I should speak with regard to the Bill now before Parliament; the Land Transfer Bill.

213. I do not think that would be desirable at present. I was anxious to have your opinion about the result of legislation actually passed; how far in your opinion has that tended to the dispersion of land, and consequently to facilitate the creation of small holdings?—Practically to no extent. The Settled Land Act has not had a large operation in that direction, because the proceeds of sale could not be appropriated to the owner's uses.

214. Do you know whether estates have been brought into the market to any considerable extent under that Act?—I have not heard that they have been largely brought into the market. I have heard of the transfer of an estate from one settled owner to another settled owner, which, of course, would not be an advantage from my point of view. But that recent legislation has tended in anything like an adequate manner to facilitate the sale of land I should strenuously deny.

215. Up to this point you have spoken rather

Chairman—continued.

of the hindrances to the creation of small holdings; now, let me ask, is there any legislation which has tended to facilitate their creation?—To that question I would mention that the only facilitating statute that I know of is the Glebe Lands Act of last Session, 1888. I do not, of course, point to this as a sufficient statute. I think that even in regard to the land to which it relates, it is very inadequate, and very insufficient for public purposes.

216. Will you state the clauses which you consider have been operative in this direction?—The Act contains in Clause 8 the following provision: "For the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of land by cottagers, labourers, and others, it shall be the duty of the Land Commissioners in giving their approval of a sale under this Act, either to require as a condition thereof that the land or some part thereof, shall be offered for sale in small parcels, or to the sanitary authority of a sanitary district for the purposes of the Allotments Act, 1887, or to satisfy themselves that such offer is not practicable without diminishing the price which can be obtained for the Glebe Land on a sale." Under that Act any incumbent may apply to the Land Commissioners for authority to sell such part of the glebe as is not connected with the incumbent's house and curtilage, and on their approval they are bound to consider whether the offer should not be made of that land in small parcels. I venture to put this matter to the Committee as one of great importance, because of all public lands none are so widely dispersed throughout the country as glebe lands. The Act is, as I have shown, permissive. Having regard to the condition of the glebe lands, and to the fact that they are the worst cultivated lands in the kingdom, I should myself be disposed to advocate that that power should be made compulsory.

217. The power, that is to say, to sell in small parcels?—I should be disposed to advocate that glebe land other than that connected with the incumbent's house and curtilage should be sold by compulsory authority.

218. Then would you still allow the same power to the sellers to decide whether or not it would be to their advantage to sell in large or small parcels?—I would exercise as much compulsion as was expedient, so that glebes should be sold in small parcels, giving to them a power of exchange for other lands in order to facilitate such disposal. With regard to the cultivation of glebe land, and the strong opinion I have given, I should like permission to support that opinion by the authority of the Assistant Commissioner who examined much glebe land under the Duke of Richmond's Commission.

219. You are dealing I understand with the condition of glebe land under the present system?—Yes, and suggesting the reason why compulsory sale should be the principle applied to this land. Mr. Coleman, one of the Assistant Commissioners under the Duke of Richmond's Commission, said in his evidence, "Take glebe land; are there any estates that are much worse managed than they? I say, for this reason, that the tenant is a life owner, and in the most limited degree."

 220. Have

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Chairman – continued.

220. Have you any information as to the extent of these glebe lands?—I think there is no return in existence which could be regarded as at all trustworthy on that point, but judging from such estimate as I could make, I have thought that an average of 20 acres for 10,000 benefices, and a gross annual value, 400,000 *l.* might not be excessive; for much of the land is very good land, and orchard land. In illustration of what I have said as to there being no trustworthy returns of the extent of glebes, I would mention that in Lord Derby's Return to which I referred, in the list of owners, only three incumbents are returned in Hertfordshire, only five in Bucks, and in Lancaster only seven; in Huntingdon there are 44 rectors and vicars with an aggregate area of 4,414 acres, and a gross estimated rental of 7,919 *l.* This gives 100 acres for each incumbent, and a yearly value of 181 *l.*

221. Do I understand you to say that these glebe lands average about 20 acres?—That is purely my own estimate; I was quoting Lord Derby's Return upon this point, to show how utterly mistaken and untrustworthy it must be, because it returns in a great county, like Lancaster, only seven incumbents with land, and in Buckinghamshire only five.

222. But if your estimate is right, and if the average size of these holdings is 20 acres, do they not already, under the existing system, constitute an addition to the number of small owners; therefore, by any transfer such as you propose, you would not create small owners, but you would only substitute one class of small owners for another?—The incumbent is generally a bad holder of land; but while I estimate 20 acres as the average incumbency, that would be a very incorrect representation of the actual state of facts, because in some parishes the glebe lands would exceed 100 acres or 200 acres.

223. But in the majority of cases they are let to tenants already, are they not?—I should think so.

224. Therefore, so far as that is the case, the change which you propose would not involve any addition to the present number of small holders of land?—Not necessarily to a very great extent; but applications we know are coming in to the Land Commission for dealing with this land; and I mention it because, while I should, with your permission, refer to other public or *quasi* public lands later on, these are, of all others, the most widely distributed throughout the kingdom.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

225. Is it not the fact that glebe lands are very often let to graziers and large farmers?—I should hardly say to large farmers, because, as a rule, the glebes are not very extensive, but it would follow from their nature, as accommodation land, that they would, in some cases, be let for grazing.

Chairman.

226. I gather that your reason for suggesting this change is not so much to create new small holders as to improve the production and the cultivation of existing lands?—Where the glebe is extensive there would be created, either by exchange or by the use of the glebe, a considerable increase of small holders; but where the glebe was of a very limited extent there might not be any increase. In further illustration of the facts in regard to this very obscure subject, I would say that it was stated in the "Guardian," on great authority, on the 12th of January 1888, that the Committee appointed by the Diocesan Conference at Peterborough in 1881, received 336 returns from the clergy within the diocese, representing 49,629 acres of glebe land.

Chairman—continued.

227. I understand you to say that in Lord Derby's Return the rectors do not appear as owners of the glebes in the majority of cases?—The Return is so full of errors that in the county of Hertfordshire there are only three incumbents returned as possessing glebes, and only five in Buckinghamshire, and in Lancashire only seven. From my knowledge of the circumstances of those counties I feel confident there must be gross error in the Return in those respects.

228. Have you any idea under what heads those lands figure in the Return?—Largely under the names of persons having reverend prefixed to their names as owners, without any indication that the lands are of a public character.

229. Probably they appear as if they were in the absolute ownership of the incumbent?—Exactly.

230. Have you formed any opinion as to the increased facilities which might be given for the creation of small holdings by legislation?—Dealing with this subject of public and *quasi* public lands, I think the powers given by the Glebe Lands Act of 1888 might be made compulsory, and applicable to other public lands, and that private land might for the purposes of this inquiry be taken by purchase or exchange.

231. When you say by purchase, do you mean independently of any operation with regard to public land, or in connection with any operation with regard to public land?—In connection, when desirable; but there should be power also to deal with it independently.

232. It would be convenient first to deal with the question of public land: besides the glebe lands, are there any other public lands you think would be applicable to such an object?—The Return presented to Parliament some years ago showed the total extent of land held in mortmain to be about 2,000,000 acres, and it would be generally the fact that that land is of the best quality, and in the best position for dealing with in regard to the creation of small holdings. Of this area the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are undoubtedly the largest owners. I suppose the total extent of Church lands of all sorts could not reasonably be estimated at less than 500,000 acres.

233. With respect to that Church land is it widely distributed?—Not as widely as in the case of glebes. There would be a great preponderance of it in some counties, but exchange could be effected between the counties. It is more or less distributed throughout the country.

234. Then we come, I think, to the Crown lands?—Next to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners among these corporations would stand the Crown, which holds at the present time about 70,000 acres of purely agricultural land, those

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Chairman—continued.

are the two greatest corporations holding public land. The rest would be made up of colleges, hospitals, and other corporations existing throughout the kingdom.

235. I think when you were in Parliament you moved for a Select Committee to consider the question of Ecclesiastical Land?—Yes, on the 31st of March 1882 I moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the position of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners with reference to the lands and other property vested in the Commissioners. Perhaps I may mention that on that occasion Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the debate, said, "I am averse to that method of holding land;" and Mr. Goschen, also supporting my motion, said he thought I had established "that it is exceedingly difficult for them to manage these estates with all the advantage of private landlords." I may mention, perhaps, that since that motion the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have established a table, and have with considerable success endeavoured to dispose of their lands, especially their small holdings, to their tenants. A large extent of land, I think amounting in value to nearly 100,000 *l.*, has been sold under those provisions.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

236. Do you know what acreage that 100,000 *l.* would represent?—No, I cannot say; but I know that the land has been mostly disposed of in small holdings to the tenants of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Chairman.

237. Was that Select Committee which you moved for appointed?—No; but the subject engaged the attention of a Select Committee in 1863 (I think it was called a Committee on the Ecclesiastical Commission). I should like to read two of the recommendations of that Committee in support of the suggestion that I have offered to-day. The Committee of 1863 reported with regard to the land held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other Church lands, and made the following two recommendations: "First, that the system of throwing permanently the administration of large properties scattered over the whole country into the hands of one central body is objectionable;" and, secondly, "That independently of the political objection to such a concentration of property, this system unavoidably consumes a considerable part of the revenues of the Church in the expenses of valuing and re-valuing lands, and in the maintenance of a large establishment of secretaries and clerks. Your Committee are of opinion that this excessive expenditure is to be attributed in some degree to the fact that estates so widely dispersed are placed under the management of one corporation."

238. Did the Committee make any recommendation?—Those are two of their recommendations.

239. That is rather a criticism of the existing system, is it not, I assume you infer from the passage you have read that they were in favour of the sale of these properties?—I understood from that that they condemned the holding of land in mortmain by these corporations; and upon these recommendations considerable sales have followed. In the case of Greenwich Hospital, for instance, there was, under Mr. Goschen's administration, a very considerable sale of land to the tenants following upon the recommendation of this Committee.

Chairman—continued.

240. May I ask you whether you know upon what terms the lands are sold to the tenants by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—They have a printed scale, but I am not in possession of it at this present moment.

241. Is the principle the principle of deferred payment?—It is the principle of deferred payment; payment by instalments.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

242. It is according to a certain number of years' purchase (generally 25 years) on the value of existing land, is it not?—Yes; they have a fixed scale on the printed list.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

243. Do you know whether that considerably raised the annual payments by the tenants to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—I am under the impression that it did not.

Chairman.

244. Has there been any subsequent proposal in the way of legislation dealing with estates in mortmain?—Yes, in 1884 Lord Randolph Churchill introduced in the House of Commons the Mortmain Law Amendment Bill, which would have had a very important operation.

245. Can you state the main proposals in that Bill?—This Bill had three main provisions, one giving power to persons having the management of lands in mortmain to sell within a period of ten years.

246. That was permissive?—That was permissive. The second provision was (and this is compulsory), that at the end of ten years unsold land should vest in the Land Commissioners for England, and in the Irish Land Commission respectively. And the third provision was that the Land Commissioners for England and Ireland should sell as they should think fit, with power of management in the meantime.

247. There was nothing in that legislation with regard to the creation of small holdings was there?—No.

248. Do you approve of the proposal absolutely to sell and dispose of public lands?—That is a matter much in dispute, but holding very strongly myself the opinion that the State cannot by any possibility alienate its absolute property in land, I have always been in favour of granting to the holder or owner of land the largest possible power for the enjoyment of his own rights. Some persons object to the sale of public land on the ground that it involves a parting with the rights of control or ownership on the part of the State. That appears to me absolutely impossible; I cannot conceive a condition in which the State can alienate any part or parcel of its absolute property in land. Therefore I am not in favour of giving leasing powers of public land, because it gives to the owner an insufficient enjoyment, and I think he is less likely to operate upon

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Chairman—continued.

upon the land for the welfare of the public at large than if he had the freehold.

249. Do you object to these leases even where they are perpetuity leases, and the rent is in the shape of a moderate quit-rent?—I think it would be better, having regard to the fact that the State cannot alienate its absolute property in the land, to give the holder the fullest power which the laws of the State admit, which under the present law is freehold.

Sir *George Campbell.*

250. Do you object to perpetuity leases?—No, but I want, for the purposes of registration of ownership, to have the utmost simplicity, uniformity, and singleness of title; therefore in dealing with this public land, I should be glad in all cases to grant the fullest power that the State can grant, which under the present law is freehold.

Chairman.

251. I understand you approve of the principle of Lord Randolph Churchill's Bill, which involves practically the compulsory sale of this public land?—I approve of it very strongly, but I should like to draw it still tighter; for instance, I see no reason why the 10 years should not be reduced to five, or why the general power should not be made more stringent, or why provisions should not be inserted for complying with the objects, as I understand them, of this Committee.

252. You would insert, I understand, similar provisions to those suggested in connection with the Glebe Lands Act, for disposing of property to small holders?—Yes, with the addition of powers of exchange, and with the variation that the action would be compulsory instead of permissive.

253. The compulsory action refers, I understand, to the sale; you would not necessarily, I presume, make it compulsory that the land should be sold to small holders?—Certainly not.

254. You would only instruct the sellers to prefer small holders, where that could be done, without injury to the estate?—Yes, where that could be done without injury, or else by exchange with other land.

255. Do you think that an operation of that kind would be best undertaken by the State or in connection with the local authority?—If I felt confident that the local authority would make use of such powers I should greatly prefer that it was placed in their hands.

256. In what way do you suppose that the local authority would be lax in using such power?—For the reason that it is extremely difficult to obtain action from the local authority when only one class, or category, or a small number of individuals are to be directly benefited by the proceeding.

257. Before following that out, would you just consider how the local authority would be brought into the matter if it were thought desirable to do so; would you transfer the land in the first instance to the local authority?—Supposing that the local authority were to have the power of dealing with the matter, it appears to

Chairman—continued.

me that the public land in each county might be vested for these purposes in the County Council.

258. Therefore the local authority would have to pay over to the present Commissioners or trustees for such lands, their ascertained value, and thereafter take the responsibility upon themselves?—Yes, placing the local authority in exactly the same position as in Lord Randolph Churchill's Bill, he proposed to place the Land Commissioners in England and Ireland respectively.

259. In Lord Randolph Churchill's Bill the State would have been responsible for any loss made by the Land Commissioners in selling the land, would it not?—Yes.

260. If the local authority were substituted, of course the local authorities would be responsible for any loss?—Yes, but I do not see exactly how under Lord Randolph Churchill's Bill loss could accrue.

261. As I understand, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners would obtain from the Land Commissioners the value of the land in money?—Yes.

262. And the Land Commissioners, having paid in money the ascertained value of the land, if thereafter under their management there was any loss, or if when they came to sell they found the ascertained value could not be obtained, that loss would have to be borne by the Land Commissioners, or, in other words, by the State?—I did not quite understand that that would be the *modus operandi*; I was under the impression that that Bill would have vested the land in the Land Commissioners, and that the result of their transactions in the land would represent property to be received by those from whom it had been taken.

263. In that case it would only be a transfer from one trustee to another?—Exactly.

264. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners would disappear in this transaction, and the Land Commissioners would take their place?—Exactly.

265. They would pay over from time to time the annual receipts from the land or the product of any sale?—Yes. As in the case of the Irish Church Land Commission, I presume.

266. Carrying that idea forward, supposing that the local authorities were substituted, would you allow them to deal with this land at the expense of the interests represented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—That introduces a difficulty, of course; that is one of the difficulties incident to placing the matter in the hands of the local government.

267. Would not the interests represented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners complain if the future management of their property were transferred to a body which might have other obligations and other interests altogether apart from those of the Church?—I think there would be some ground for such a feeling.

268. The only way then, as it appears to me, in which it would be just to transfer this land to the local authorities, would be if the local authorities were authorised to pay its ascertained value, and thereafter to become the absolute owners, dealing with it for their own purposes?—That could be done.

269. In

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Chairman—continued.

269. In the case of profit or loss in the transaction, that would go to the rates?—Yes, and that condition would interpose a difficulty in the acceptance of that responsibility by the local government.

270. But if it were carried out in that way, you would impose upon the local authorities the obligation of distributing these lands for the purpose of small cultivation, so far as that was possible without serious loss?—Exactly; they would stand in the position of the Land Commission, and would conduct the operation in the same manner.

271. They would have, therefore, an obligation which at the present time is not placed upon the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—Certainly.

272. To that extent the property would be deteriorated in their hands by the operation?—Yes, by the acceptance of a new obligation.

273. The probabilities of loss would be increased?—Yes, but I do not suppose that loss would necessarily accrue. However, the possibility would exist.

274. Supposing they had obtained the land with this obligation what would you suggest as their *modus operandi*; is it your idea that they would then proceed to let the land like any ordinary landowner, but always with a preference given to small holders?—One difficulty might arise as regards placing it in the hands of local authorities, from the fact of the very unequal distribution of the lands in the various counties; that difficulty might be reduced by giving wide powers of exchange of land from one county to another.

Sir *William Hart-Dyke.*

275. You mean exchanging only public land, I suppose?—Yes, or it might occur in the case of private land.

Chairman.

276. That would be a very difficult operation, would it not, for a local authority?—Very difficult.

277. Such an exchange must be precedent to the vesting of the land in the local authority?—I am specially pointing to the unequal distribution of land throughout the kingdom as another difficulty in connection with the suggestion to place these powers in the hands of local authorities, because they would hardly be able to conduct these exchanges from one county to another, or from a public body to a private individual.

278. Supposing, however, that those difficulties were overcome, would you suggest that the local authorities having obtained this land should be compelled to sell it or offer it for sale, or would you prefer that they should retain the freehold and lease the land to small cultivators?—I should distinctly prefer that they should sell the fullest possible property that they possessed in the land, holding as I do always strongly to the opinion that for all purposes of rating or for the exercise of State authority, it is impossible for the State or Parliament to divest itself in any way of its absolute property in land.

Chairman—continued.

279. You are very familiar, of course, with the controversy about unearned increment?—I think so.

280. Do you not think that it would be good policy to preserve the freehold in some public or representative authority in order that the public might have the advantage of any unearned increment?—Regarding, as I do, the right of the public to unearned increment as unquestionable (meaning by unearned increment all the value that is added to the land by the action or influence of the community), I cannot conceive circumstances under which the land could be dealt with by which the State or the local authority would lose their power of obtaining the unearned increment, and my mode of obtaining the unearned increment would be by an equitable valuation of the land in each generation and a payment in the form of succession duty upon its capital value.

281. Now, supposing that the difficulties of the interposition of local authority were thought to be insuperable, what alternative is there?—A Land Commission.

282. A Land Commission, to be appointed for the purpose of taking over these lands and distributing them?—Certainly.

283. And in their case I gather your idea is that they would make sales as quickly as they could, giving a preference to small holders?—Yes, and that they would also have the power of making advances or loans to purchasers.

284. To what extent would you give them authority to make loans?—I have thought that it would be desirable to limit that to the sum of 500 *l.* Originally Lord Ashbourne's Act had no limitation. In 1887 the advance upon a single holding was limited to 5,000 *l.* By the Act of last Session it was limited to 2,000 *l.*, showing the gradual acceptance and the extreme importance of some such governing principle. I would bring that principle still more forward and make the limitation 500 *l.*

285. That is to say, you would allow a loan to the extent of 500 *l.* on each purchase without regard to the proportions that the 500 *l.* might bear to the purchase money?—What I propose is that the Land Commission should have authority to make advances, but they should be so limited that no advance should exceed 500 *l.*

286. But would you have any limit in the proportion to the amount of purchase-money as well?—I would limit the advances absolutely to 500 *l.* under the Act in the discretion of the Commissioners.

287. Supposing that a small estate were sold for 500 *l.* would you be prepared from the State funds to advance the whole of the purchase-money?—I think not.

288. Therefore you would put a limit of proportion as well as a limit of amount; as I understand, you would only advance a certain proportion of the purchase-money, and you would further provide that in no case should that proportion exceed 500 *l.*?—I think it would be a matter for consideration whether the provision should be that advances should be made with reasonable regard to security, or that an absolute limit should be fixed. I should myself have

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Chairman—continued.

confidence in the Commissioners that they would not make advances that were liable to insecurity.

289. I would put it in this way; would you require in every case that the purchaser should provide a portion of the purchase money?—Certainly, in some form or other. Perhaps before leaving the subject of local government, I might say that all my evidence has reference also to the point of registration of title, and I do not see how the local government could be the registration authority, because of the absolute necessity of having throughout the country strict uniformity in regard to the transfer of land.

290. I think it has been proposed, if my recollection is right, to make the local authority the registering authority?—I myself should be extremely glad to see all possible power in the hands of local authorities, but having given many years' attention to the subject of registration of title, I may say in my opinion it would be necessary that the powers of local authorities should in some degree be limited as to the matter, because undoubtedly it would be found convenient that there should be a central office where transfers might be conducted by persons who were not resident in the county in which the transfer was made.

291. There would be no difficulty in communicating such transfers and having them inscribed in the registers of the local authorities, would there?—None whatever, provided all the forms and modes of dealing with land are strictly uniform in their printing and other circumstances throughout the kingdom.

292. There is no reason why that should not be so; the local authority might exercise a purely ministerial duty, might it not?—If that were made secure I think it might be preferable that it should be in the hands of the local authority.

293. The whole district represented by the local authority might have its register in the offices of the local authority?—It might be so.

294. And there might be a duplicate of it in some central office?—Yes, but absolute uniformity throughout the whole of the kingdom seems to me to be essential.

295. Now I think you are of opinion that this question of registration of title has a very close bearing upon the subject of our inquiry?—Very close indeed.

296. It is extremely important, is it not, to have a convenient and complete system of registration, if small holdings are to be successfully established?—Extremely. If people at large had confidence in the simplicity, the economy, the speed, and the cheapness of the system, there would be an entire change of attitude, in my opinion, in the great body of the people towards the cultivation of the soil.

297. Have you considered what changes are necessary in order to secure a thorough satisfactory registration of titles?—As I have suggested at the commencement, the abolition of the settlement of land is necessary in order to place any considerable body of land at disposal. But what seems to me to be absolutely necessary is that, as a preliminary, there should be a

Chairman—continued.

simplification of title by the abolition of the practice of settlement, and then that the title to be registered should be uniform; that is to say, I differ from the proposal now before Parliament, which is that there shall be three sorts of titles given; you may have a possessory, a qualified, or an absolute title. It would be compulsory under the proposed Bill now before Parliament to register one form of title, and for cheapness probably most persons would accept the possessory title as the cheapest form.

298. You are now speaking of the Lord Chancellor's Bill?—Yes; that is, in my opinion, simply an addition to the cost of purchase and worthless in regard to the simplification of title, because it would not permit that anyone should dispose of their deeds.

299. You want in every case an indefeasible title, as I understand?—I want in every case with which the register deals an indefeasible title, and perhaps one short way to that would be to declare that 12 years' possession, together with the production of the deed upon which that possession was founded, should give the right to absolute title.

300. Would that idea be satisfied if you had compulsory registration, and the title became indefeasible after 12 years of uncontested registration?—Certainly, if that became so in all cases.

301. Would not that be a less arbitrary way than to give an indefeasible title from the commencement of the new policy of registration?—I have said that if an absolute or guaranteed title were given to everyone who desired it or made a transfer of his land and had been in undisputed possession for 12 years, and produced at the same time *primâ facie* evidence of his title, that would be satisfactory. The hindrance to that is the existence of life estates over probably more than 50,000,000 acres of our land. I would illustrate that by referring to the succession duty; there is now a provision that the rights of the Crown for succession duty cannot be barred by time, and it was proposed by the Incorporated Law Society in connection with this Bill that the rights of the Crown as to succession duty should be barred after 12 years. If the highest right, if the highest claim which is a claim of the Crown, should be barred by authority of Parliament after 12 years, what harm would there be in barring the claims of individuals to a possible interest in land after the expiration of an equal period.

Mr. *Cobb.*

302. That would further make it practicable to destroy all the old deeds?—Perfectly, at a stroke.

Chairman.

303. Your feeling is that these changes which you propose would directly tend to the wider distribution of land?—Certainly, immediately to the wider distribution and continually to an increasing distribution of land.

304. Do you think that large ownerships lead also to large tenancies?—Certainly.

305. How do they operate in that direction?—The enjoyment of an estate depends greatly upon the

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Chairman—continued.

the size of the tenancies. The collection of rents is very much simpler upon a large tenancy; facilities for sport are practically destroyed by an increase of small holdings. These and other considerations lead undoubtedly to the preference for large tenancies on great estates; there is practically no pleasure in landowning where there is any very great number of small holdings; and the collection of rents from a number of small holders destroys much of the amenities and the pleasures of landowning. The proof of that is seen in other countries, where small farms exist, where there is no instance known of persons buying very large estates in order to become the landlords of those properties.

306. Would you take any other steps to secure the subdivision of land?—I think it would be reasonable to graduate the official fees on transfers; the official fees on transfer now, and under any system of registration that has been proposed, would greatly favour the large estates. The percentage of cost in transactions upon large estates would be a mere bagatelle, while in a small purchase it is a very considerable hindrance; I think it would be just to graduate the official fees upon purchases, so that the large purchasers should pay very considerably more in proportion than the small purchasers. I also think it would be right that the charge for succession duty should be graduated; that the charge upon all inheritances of land should be graduated in proportion to the valuation.

307. May I just ask you whether you think that the same thing should apply to all the death duties, to personalty as well as to land?—If you lead me into that subject, I would say yes; but there is no necessary conjunction.

308. I do not want to carry you away from the immediate subject of our inquiry, but I want to know whether you apply that to all estates or specially to land with the particular view of getting a subdivision of land?—The only subject I am dealing with is land, and I propose that succession duty should be graduated upon inheritances of land. I wish always to keep land and other forms of property distinct, because the possession of land imposes obligations and gives powers that no other form of property can impose or give.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

309. Land being a monopoly?—Being a natural monopoly.

310. Therefore you would hardly say that any general law which would obtain with respect to the land, should of necessity obtain with respect to personal property?—It would not of necessity obtain with respect to personal estate. For instance, I am an advocate of the abolition of settlement of land; but I do not see that it would be absolutely necessary to prevent the settlement of personalty.

Chairman.

311. In the present case, however, do you advocate a graduated duty applying to all classes of property?—Upon inheritances of land.

312. Not to personalty?—If you ask my opinion upon a subject as to which I consider that I am not giving evidence to-day, I should be in favour of a graduated duty upon all classes of property, but to-day I am specially speaking of inheritances of land, in regard to which I consider the point very much more important, with the view to obtain the unearned increment and other advantages which ought to accrue to the public.

313. My object in asking the question was to test the reasons which led you to propose it, in the case of land, and from your answer, I take it that there are reasons affecting all property which would lead you to make the proposal, though at the present moment you put it forward because you believe it would facilitate the distribution of land?—Yes.

314. In your opinion, I understand the effect of a graduated succession duty would be that it would tend to the dispersal of large properties?—Certainly.

315. That would be one object why you would propose it?—That is one object, because it is not presumably for the interest of the State that a man should hold more land than he can occupy.

316. Independently of any opinion which you may hold on inheritance generally, I presume you would be inclined to penalise large estates in land?—I will not say to "penalise," because I should like variety to exist. I think it is useful that variety should exist.

317. If you put a heavy duty upon a large estate you surely to that extent penalise the large estate?—I hold the opinion very strongly that that is the best condition of land-holding in which a man holds no more land than he can occupy.

318. Therefore I am right in saying that you do penalise the large estate to some extent; your answer is that it is not the interest of the State to foster the accumulation of large properties in land, and you would penalise him to some extent by increased duties?—I would certainly have a graduated succession duty upon inheritances of land, whatever that may involve.

319. I think you are of opinion that without some such change as this there would be no large amount of land available for the creation of small holdings?—Until the land is free, that is to say, until we abolish the practice of settlement, the extent of land to be got at for small holdings must be trifling. I would illustrate that by reference to detached allotments. There are many persons who suppose a great extent of land is available or is used for allotments. I see by a Return presented to the House of Commons that the total extent of land in allotments detached from cottages does not amount in the whole of England to more than 100,000 acres.

320. But allotments as distinguished from holdings are all in very small quantities, that is to say, each individual has a very small quantity of land?—I assume there in arriving at that figure that a quarter of an acre would be the average allotment for each man, and therefore it is a different matter from the question of small holdings.

321. The quantity of land there is determined rather by the demand; for allotments pure and simple there cannot be under any circumstances a demand

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Chairman—continued.

a demand for a very large acreage, because the desire of a labourer for an allotment is satisfied generally by something under an acre?—That calculation is based upon the assumption that each allotment would not exceed a quarter of an acre on an average, and therefore the area allotments is very small; but I should not be prepared to say that the demand for allotments is at present satisfied

322. But supposing there were 800,000 labourers wanting, allowing them a quarter of an acre a-piece, independently of what they may already have in connection with their cottages, that would amount altogether to 200,000 acres?—But I do not see why the allotment system, which I regard as a school of thrift and saving rather than as an agricultural reform, should not be also extended to town populations, and be taken advantage of largely by artizans near a town.

323. I am only asking you what reason you have for supposing that the smallness of land appropriated to allotments, is due to the absence of land available for the purpose?—I think it is largely due to the difficulty, amounting in some parishes to the impossibility, of obtaining land for such purposes under existing conditions; when I say impossibility, I mean of course the impossibility without the exercise of powers that do to some extent exist, but are not made use of.

324. Have you paid any attention to the foreign systems of cultivation and tenure?—Yes. I would like to mention especially one, which is certainly the best in Europe (that is, the German system) as regards the transfer of land, dealing with public lands and assistance to purchasers. To illustrate the German system, which was established in the year 1872 (and which, as to registration of title and the transfer of land, is not only the best in Europe, but is probably better in some respects than the systems obtaining in some of our own Colonies), I may say that in Germany an absolute title is granted upon mere possession for 44 years; or upon possession for 10 years, with *primâ facie* evidence that such possession had a legal commencement, and the German fees for all parties upon the transfer of land of the value of 100 *l.* do not amount to 10 *s.*; while under the English system they would amount to 10 *l.*, which is practically a prohibition upon the purchaser.

Sir *George Campbell.*

325. When you say the fees, do you mean the public fees?—I mean the public fees, but then it must be remembered the public fees in Prussia and other parts of Germany are practically the whole of the fees, because, as a rule, the sales and purchases are carried out by the parties themselves without any legal assistance. In illustration of that, and of what I have suggested to the Committee about public lands, I would mention the Report by Mr. Scott, our Secretary of Legation at Coburg, upon this subject; it is Commercial Report No. 44, 1882. He gives in that Report an account of the sale of certain parts of the Grand Ducal lands in small lots varying from 1 to 6 acres. Those parcels

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

of land were bought in every case by artizans, masons, wood-carvers, and men engaged in other industries in the town of Coburg and the adjacent villages; and in every case he reports that the whole of the business was transacted by the purchasers under such fees as I have mentioned, without any legal assistance whatever; he says that these men are engaged in very flourishing industries, supplying dairy produce and other useful things to the town; and he concludes by remarking that great moral and material improvement has been caused in these villages by the sale of this public land; the mode of payment was either payment in full at once or 10 per cent. at once, and the rest in payments, with 5 per cent. interest, not to extend over more than 18 years. But in every case of the sale of public land, the whole of the money has been repaid with great advantage to the State funds, and, as I have said, "the whole transactions were conducted and completed directly between the parties without legal assistance."

Chairman.

326. In Germany is there anything of the nature of a graduated transfer fee, such as you propose, or a graduated succession duty?—I am not aware that there is, but the fees are very small; I have the table here showing the fees: these fees include all parties, and they are as follow: the office fee for a sale of land of the value of 30 *l.* would be 6 *s.*, for a sale of land of the value of 100 *l.* it would be 9 *s.* 9 *d.*, of the value of 150 *l.* it would be 10 *s.* 6 *d.*; while in England the same purchase of land of the value of 150 *l.* would cost upon our official scale 10 *l.* It must also be remarked that in Germany this includes every cost to the purchaser, and he obtains a perfectly indefeasible certificate of title.

327. Is there any more which you wish to say with regard to this German system?—Yes, in Germany, so easy is the system, that a mortgage of 5 *l.* is a common transaction, owing to the facility and cheapness with which such a loan can be advanced upon land. There is also another condition which bankers find extremely convenient. All over Germany there is a system (which obtains only in Germany) whereby a man can give what is called a land-charge with coupons attached; this is payable to bearer and passable from hand to hand, and is deposited with bankers with great facility; I heard it recommended not long ago at a meeting of bankers in the City of London; and I was very much struck with the general expression of satisfaction as to the means that it would afford, if adopted in England, for advances of money. I would like to add just a word about the land banks. In Germany, when the change as regards the land began, redemption banks were established for the redemption of feudal charges upon land. In 1865 those were converted into land banks. The cost of a loan from a land bank in most parts of Germany is a single payment of 1 per cent. on the amount of the advance for the expenses of the bank. The annual payment of the rate of interest agreed upon is determined by the value of the security pledged, plus one half per cent. to form a sinking fund for repayment.

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Chairman—continued.

The State guarantees all the obligations of this advance, and the surplus profits of the bank revert to the State Treasury. Mr. Scott, in this Report to which I have referred, mentions the bank at Coburg as doing a thriving business, and paying a considerable revenue for the privilege it enjoys to the funds of the State.

328. Would you tell me what the advantage of the bank is; the bank is practically a State institution, is it not?—The bank is practically a State institution.

329. The State guarantees its transactions, and the State takes the profit, does it not?—That is so.

330. Practically these banks are offices or departments of the Government, rather than banks doing a general business?—Yes, that must be so with the guarantee they have. I mention that system because it seems to be analogous to our system of advances under the authority of the Land Commissioners in connection with the principle of Lord Ashbourne's Act in Ireland.

331. Is it not the fact that these small holders in Germany are very much embarrassed by loans, whether from banks or money-lenders?—I have frequently heard that reported; but some examination of the subject on the spot has led me to the opinion that no landowners in the world are in such a condition of embarrassment as the English landed gentry, whose obligations I should estimate at certainly not less than 400,000,000 *l.* sterling; therefore, I do not conceive it practicable to have a land system without liability to heavy charges of the sort upon the proprietors; but I cannot conceive a system, and I am certain there exists no system in the world which aggregates this charge upon the owners to the same degree as the English land system.

332. We have been told that both in France and Germany the small owners are much embarrassed, and that there are heavy charges upon their property, caused by their desire to make provision for younger children, and on similar accounts; and it has been proposed to us in adopting any scheme for the creation of small proprietors in this country, that some steps should be taken to limit the right of mortgage; what is your opinion as regards that proposal?—I should be strongly averse to any proposal of the sort, for two reasons; first, because there is no mode in which money can be employed so beneficially to the community as in the promotion of agriculture, owing to the fact that there nature co-operates with the workman; and, secondly, because every sale of land is presumably for public advantage, for it is generally a fair presumption that the incoming purchaser will make a better use of the land than the outgoing seller. I am not at all in favour of limiting, and I think it would lead to very bad results to limit the power of mortgaging land.

Sir *William Hart-Dyke.*

333. Then you would not prevent the re-accumulation of land in one hand?—I have already put forward arguments as to that.

334. But as I understand, you have no suggestion to make to prevent the recurrence of what you are deploring, namely, the accumulation of land in one hand in large quantities?—I have

Sir *William Hart-Dyke*—continued.

suggested the abolition of settlement, a graduated charge, and also facilities for purchase.

335. But would you suggest any remedy in the particular direction that the Chairman has suggested?—I certainly would not abolish the power of mortgaging land.

Chairman.

336. You would not, I understand, put any limitation upon the power of these new owners to divide their land?—No, I would not. I will ask permission to say, with regard to former questions about the continental systems, that I do think in the continental systems great improvement could be introduced. I think there are great inconveniences, especially in France, as regards the bad distribution of property resulting from constant sub-division. What is needed would be some power of consolidating the property. The greatest evil that exists in France in connection with the sub-division of land is the wide distribution and the inconvenient distribution of the property of one individual.

337. Have you examined into the question of the success which has attended this sub-division of land in Germany or France; I mean as regards the position of individual occupiers and holders?—I should be prepared to say from my own observation that in every country without exception, the largest produce is always raised from small holdings. But the agricultural laws of France and Germany are far from perfect. Their operation is much misrepresented by statistics in this country. I am not prepared to say to the Committee that either the French or the German system is absolutely good. The mode of transfer and conveyance of land in France is very bad in many respects.

338. It has been stated with regard to these small holders by public writers (by Lady Verney for instance, and others), that their condition is really much worse than that of our agricultural labourers?—Yes, I saw a statement made by Lady Verney that some millions of the proprietary of France were on the pauper list. Of course that is a statement that would never be made by any writer who really understood the conditions of land-owning in France. To begin with, there is no pauper list in France. I think it would be as reasonable to suggest that persons who are excused from income tax in this country are on the pauper list as to suggest, as Lady Verney does, that because a certain number of peasant proprietors are excused from the payment of taxes they are also paupers.

339. You do not agree with that view of the condition of small holders in France?—Certainly not; the boundless wealth they have displayed in the liberation of their country is the most effectual contradiction to any such argument.

340. It has been suggested that the principle of Lord Ashbourne's Act might be applied to this country with a view to create small holdings, that is to say, that tenants and others might be stimulated to buy their holdings by the advance from the State of the purchase money, or a portion of the purchase money; what is your opinion of that proposal?—I have long been in favour of the extension of the principle

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Chairman—continued.

of Lord Ashbourne's Act to Great Britain, but I should certainly object to its operation being limited to tenants, who may be and very often are undesirable purchasers; I should also be anxious that it should be limited in its operation, as I stated before; that no advance to a holding to which it applied should exceed 500 *l.*

341. Coming to another head of our inquiry, have you any information you wish to give to the Committee as to the alleged diminution in the number of small owners and cultivators of land?—That is a point upon which it is extremely difficult to give a specific answer; but undoubtedly up to 1871, and for some time afterwards, there was a profound but mistaken opinion that large farms alone could succeed.

342. Before you deal with any theoretical reasons, will you say whether, to your knowledge, there are any statistics which would show by comparison the number of small owners existing, say, 20, 30, or 40 years ago, as compared with the number now?—I should say there are no trustworthy statistics as to that, because those that exist include the owners of villas and other urban property to a large and confusing extent with those whom you would regard as peasant proprietors; but, of course, with regard to the matter of inclosures we come to more precise figures.

343. I think you are of opinion that for a long while there was a process going on for aggregating farms and making large tenancies from small ones?—That was so.

344. The assumption being that large cultivation was more profitable than small, and could be conducted with greater advantages?—Yes, and at that time Lord Derby used these words, which I will venture to say no man of eminence would use at the present day. He said, "The peasant cultivator, honest and industrious and frugal as he may be, has just as much chance of holding his own against the combination of capital and science, as bows and arrows have of superseding breech-loading rifles, or hand-loom weaving of driving the power-loom out of the field."

345. You do not agree with that opinion?—Not only do I not agree, but I am sure that Lord Derby would not make such a statement at the present time, because he would see that whereas the hand-loom passes of necessity into a museum as obsolete, there never was a time in the history of the world where so large an amount of the produce of the world was derived by spade industry as there is at the present moment.

346. According to your inquiries, you think that a larger produce might be expected from small holdings than from large holdings?—Yes; it is so always. I would state that in the inquiry before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, the evidence given with regard to one small owner of land showed that he was a more successful agriculturist than any other person who appeared before that Commission. The evidence I refer to was given by a man of the name of Jeremiah Crook, and it appears in Mr. Doyle's reports. These are his words: "I occupy three acres of land, very poor when I took to it; two acres are my own; the other I rent at about 2 *l.* the acre. In 1869 I had 45 bushels (62 lbs. to the bushel) on one acre after deducting two for sparrows: in 1870, 57½ bushels on 1¼ acres; in 1872 I used plenty of manure, I had 45 bushels to the acre again, and three tons of straw." He also said that he sold 100 fat pigs a year for the last 10 years; he got well through 1879; and he adds, "my experience teaches me that from smaller farms there will be two or three times the produce raised."

Chairman—continued.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

347. Is that an isolated instance you are quoting, or do you consider it a fair criterion of the general evidence given before the Duke of Richmond's Commission with regard to the relative produce of large and small holdings?—It is as fair as other instances relating to other classes of holdings would be.

348. What I mean is, do you think that represents the general tendency of the evidence with regard to the produce of small holdings; or was the general tendency of the evidence very much the reverse?—The general tendency of the evidence was against the conclusion that this would be the case with all small holdings; but then permit me to say that the evidence was very unfair in this particular, that only one, or I think at the most two representatives of small holdings were presented before the Commission.

349. I think it is the case (you will correct me if I am wrong) that the sub-commissioners of that Commission inquired very deeply and carefully indeed into this subject, did they not?—I gather so from their reports.

350. And the tendency of their report was in the direction that I have indicated, was it not?—Undoubtedly.

Chairman.

351. I understand, however, that your view is that the belief, which was general, that small husbandry was unprofitable and was, in fact, almost barbarous and antiquated, tended to the reduction of the number of small owners?—Yes, undoubtedly.

352. Proprietors were led to reduce the number of small cultivators in order to carry out what was considered to be the most advanced method of cultivation?—That is so. They argued that agriculture was like manufacture, and that what was successful in manufacture would be so in agriculture, omitting the consideration that the superintendence of agriculture and of manufacture is essentially different and must always be different and under different conditions.

353. Do you consider that the inclosures have had anything to do with the diminution in the number of small owners?—I think that inclosures have had a very powerful influence indeed in reducing the number of persons having an interest in the land. Those who lived in the neighbourhood of commons felt undoubtedly a certain amount of agricultural interest from which they were shut out upon inclosure taking place. I would like to make the following short statement, which seems to me to present the facts with regard to inclosures.

354. We

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Chairman—continued.

354. We have had the results as to the acreage of inclosures and so on put before us already by another witness; it is only as to the practical effect of those inclosures that I would trouble you now?—The effect of the inclosures has undoubtedly been numerically to diminish very largely the number of persons having an interest, or feeling that they have an interest, in connection with the land.

355. It has diminished the number of the classes in your opinion who might be supposed to be likely to take advantage of any facilities to become small owners?—Yes. 5,000,000 acres certainly have been inclosed since the passing of the Inclosure Act, and that must have had a very powerful influence.

356. Summarising what you have said, I understand that it is your opinion that there has been a very considerable diminution in the number of small cultivators in recent times?—Inclosure of course has largely reduced the number of those who felt an interest in the land. The allotments that have been made as resulting from the Inclosure Acts have sometimes passed into the hands of separate proprietors; and therefore, taking the numbers as shown in a tabular form, there might be said to be some increase in the number. To illustrate what I mean: It would sometimes happen that 100 persons would have an active and real interest in the common, and that when the inclosure was effected there would be 10 or 20 perhaps who had a permanent and proprietary interest in the land so inclosed; so that in the tables of the number of owners there might be an apparent increase while in fact there was a real decrease in the number of persons interested in the soil.

357. But you are referring now entirely to the effect of inclosures; I want you to consider the whole of the causes which you have mentioned to us and to say whether in your opinion those causes have diminished the number of small owners and cultivators throughout the kingdom?—Yes, generally throughout the country, they have. The operation of the laws relating to the purchase and tenure of land have really decreased the number of owners, especially of those holding between 30, or 50, and 100 acres of land.

358. That is your answer to the last head of our reference, as I understand. You say that the diminution is due to laws affecting the disposal of land?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

359. I am sorry that I had not the opportunity of hearing the beginning of your evidence, but I should like to ask one or two questions with regard to the instance that you gave us of a larger production being raised upon small holdings; have you any other instances of that?—I have no instance by name before me; but I have witnessed a great number of instances, especially on the Continent; and I have no doubt whatever in those countries, as in this country, the largest produce is invariably raised upon small holdings.

360. But with regard to this particular instance which you gave us, that was taken from some evidence given before the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression, was it not?—From the report of Mr. Doyle.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

361. There is no other instance in Mr. Doyle's report, or in the report of the other sub-commissioners that you are aware of, is there?—I did not gather from their evidence that they were at all favourable to the creation of small holdings; but I gather that they were rather of the opposite opinion.

362. From investigations they had made I presume?—No; I think rather from personal prejudice.

363. What led you to think that?—The tone of their reports.

364. Have you studied the evidence?—I think I have read almost every page of the four volumes.

365. Are you of opinion that the evidence given before that Commission ought to have led them to an opposite conclusion, and would have done so if it had not been for this unfair prejudice?—No, I think a different selection of witnesses, a larger selection of those interested in small holdings, would have been much more satisfactory. I think also that the selection of assistant commissioners with a better regard to diversity of opinion upon this matter would have had a more satisfactory result.

366. But taking the Commission as it was constituted, and their labours and their inquiry for what it is worth, I understand the instance you have quoted is the only instance you are able to find in which the evidence shows conclusively that the small holdings do produce a greater quantity?—That is the only instance afforded in that report.

367. In that particular instance can you tell us anything as to the nature and the quality of the land of which the holding was composed?—I know nothing of the case beyond finding it in Mr. Doyle's report.

368. Does he say whether it was very good land?—My impression is that he makes no reference to the quality of the land. But I would mention that this is in strict accord with the results in another part of the United Kingdom, namely, Jersey, where the average of farms is about 10 acres, and where certainly the average produce of wheat is 10 to 15 bushels higher per acre than it is in England.

369. The climate of Jersey I suppose as well as the soil is exceptionally favourable, is it not, for wheat?—I cannot believe (and I have had some practice in agriculture) that the soil of Jersey is so well adapted for growing wheat as that of the county which the Honourable Member represents, Lincolnshire.

370. You have told us that you have studied the whole of the evidence that was given before the Duke of Richmond's Commission; what impression did you derive from the evidence given with regard to small holdings abroad. I think it is Mr. Jenkins' evidence, is it not?—Yes, I derived very great value from reading Mr. Jenkins' reports. I read them with great interest and I thought that undoubtedly they did afford evidence in favour of small holdings. They went to correct English opinion in one or two important respects. I have heard men of political eminence speak of France as if it were a country of small proprietors, whereas Mr. Jenkins shows that, taking land round Rouen,

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

90 per cent of the farms there are let to tenants. He also makes it pretty clear that the production of wheat in France is low, partly because of the large number of farms that are tenanted and are not proprietary; and he also shows that the laws relating to landlord and tenant in France are very defective, very much more so than those which obtain in this country. I have often heard it put forward as a reason against peasant proprietorship that the average produce of wheat in France is so much lower than our own. Upon that point I should like to state to the Committee the facts as to the mode in which the calculations in France are made. Misrepresentation with regard to the average production of wheat occurs in France because the growth per acre in each department is estimated, and the whole is then cast up, and the total is divided by 87, the number of the departments, and the product is given as the production of wheat per acre in France. I need not say that that is a wrong system, which must result in misrepresentation of the facts.

371. But is it not the case that Mr. Jenkins' report draws an unfavourable contrast between the condition of the peasant proprietors abroad and the condition of the labourers in England, and also between the quality of the farming in the two countries?—He comments upon the quality of farming, especially upon farms that are rented farms, but not so much, I think, upon the peasant proprietary. Mr. Jenkins does speak, if I remember rightly, upon the sorry condition of many of the peasants, but that, as so many persons have shown, is not necessarily a proof of their poverty. They have contributed so largely to the welfare of their country as to show conclusively how large their profits as agriculturists have been and generally are.

372. I am speaking purely from memory, and I am sorry to say that I have had no opportunity of refreshing my memory this morning; but does not Mr. Jenkins say in his report, speaking of the condition of the peasant proprietors, that their condition is deplorable. I think somewhere he describes it in these words: "They exist; but can hardly be said to live"?—Yes, just as people have gone to France and seen people barefooted or with only wooden shoes on, and have concluded that because the people there wear wooden shoes and people here wear leather shoes the Frenchman must be much poorer; the probability, however, being that the Frenchman has considerable savings in his bank while the Englishman has no savings. Let me refer to an instance in Mr. Jenkins' report; he says he visited one of the cabbage gardens round Rouen, and in talking to one of the growers of cabbages in those extraordinarily productive gardens, he described the bogs of Ireland, and the man threw up his hands and said, "Oh, if I were young!" meaning that he would at once try to obtain such advantages in Ireland by the production of cabbages, as might be easily done, and as is done in the neighbourhood of Rouen.

373. Do I rightly gather that you think that Mr. Jenkins' opinion was more or less superficial, and that he did not sufficiently study the condition?—Mr. Jenkins' evidence and report as to the condition of peasants in France are in direct variance with the reports of the Secretaries of Legation, one after another, who would have far better knowledge and who have reported again and again to Her Majesty's Government as to the extraordinary material prosperity of the French peasant.

374. Mr. Jenkins I think also says that on one occasion he had followed them into their houses and examined very carefully into their condition before he made this report?—Yes, during his visit as an English agriculturist of experience; but he has failed to understand the preference on the part of a man to live poorly and to save money when he is an independent person as compared with a labourer who makes no savings.

375. When you speak of the Consular Reports, do you gather from them that they describe the agricultural condition of France as being favourable as compared with our own?—I speak of the reports of the Secretaries of Legation, which are not exactly Consular Reports; those reports have again and again reported in terms of eulogy upon the material condition, in regard to their pecuniary resources, especially of the French peasantry.

376. Are you referring to the Consular Reports in France?—I refer to the Legation Reports.

377. Is that the case also with Germany and other countries?—I presume so. Certainly Mr. Scott's report, to which I referred to-day, spoke of the material and moral improvement that has followed from the sale of the Grand Ducal land at Coburg to the peasantry. But I do not wish to uphold the Land Laws in France as being in any degree perfect.

378. I do not know whether you have seen the Consular Report dated March 1888, dealing with the La Rochelle district, from Consul Pauncefote; in that report he gives a description of the state of agriculture in France, in which he includes all classes, and he says their condition is deplorable. Perhaps I might read this passage to you. Speaking generally of the farmers in France he says: "Their losses have been enormous, and however much we may have suffered in Great Britain, I hear of nothing there to compare with the depth of the depression which exists here at present. It is well that this should be clearly stated, because though it is now generally admitted at home that other countries are suffering as well as ourselves, many persons appear to think that it is in a less degree, and that we ought to be better off here, inasmuch as we enjoy a certain amount of fair trade and a peasant proprietary which people were told would bring everything right again; it is not so so far as this district is concerned." I gather that you are not acquainted with that report?—The remark of that gentleman with regard to the peasant proprietary clearly indicates his prejudice; but I would say that the marks of poverty of course become more visible when people are not in a very high condition of life to start with. The description which you have read would not vary greatly from the description which, if I may take the liberty of saying so, you yourself would be inclined to make with regard to English agriculture.

379. Putting

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

379. Putting aside the feeling of prejudice under which you suppose that he writes in common, I am afraid, with Mr. Jenkins and other Commissioners who have examined into this question, there is the statement in which he says "that their losses have been enormous; and however much we may have suffered in Great Britain I hear of nothing there to compare with the depth of the depression which exists here." You do not, as I understand, accept that evidence as being worth very much?—I do not think anyone would affirm, I do not think you, yourself, would be disposed to affirm, that it is at all probable that the agriculturists in France have lost in money a sum equal to that which has gone from the capital of the British farmer.

380. I suppose the farmers in France must, to some extent, be saved from those losses by the heavy protective duties which exist in France, and which are not enjoyed in England?—I should have thought, on the contrary, that the protective duties would tend to increase the cost of the different articles that they use, and to aggravate the position of difficulty that you describe.

381. It would not increase the price of the produce at all, you think?—It does not appear to have done so.

382. Have you studied the reports from Germany and Spain generally for the last year or two?—I cannot call to mind any very recent report. I have a general acquaintance with them.

383. Are you aware that from Spain particularly there have been reports dealing with large districts, entirely composed of peasant proprietors, in which the condition of the agricultural population is described as being quite as miserable as that which I have quoted with regard to France?—I should think it must be very bad under general conditions there.

384. But I understand you to say that you have not followed the consular reports, which are constantly being sent to the Government with regard to the condition of peasants and agriculture generally in countries abroad?—I have not read the one you refer to, but my interest in the subject has been continuous.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

385. Referring to a question put to you by Mr. Chaplin, who seems to be under the impression that the condition of the small peasant farmers in France is abject, and that the peasant farmer there is in a far worse condition than the agricultural labourers in England; let me ask you, is it not true that a comparison of the mere external condition of the agricultural labourers in France is generally prejudicial to the Englishman, because allowance is so seldom made for the greater thriftiness of the French people. The Frenchman, as I understand (my knowledge is obtained through my father who was for a great many years in France; so that my information is second-hand), shows all his poverty, and a great deal more. His habits of thrift are such that he is generally in a much better position than an Englishman is able to realise even after personal examination of his farm?—That is so. The Frenchman prefers very much the results of thrift to the appearance of affluence.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

386. Is it not the fact that, during or after the termination of the Franco-German war, the French peasants who were supposed to be in absolute poverty, made large contributions to the State loans to assist in the emancipation of their country?—I have already alluded to that fact, and it was also reported upon in a very conspicuous manner by Her Majesty's representative in France.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

387. As I understand, a great deal of your evidence is founded rather upon a consideration of policy than upon an experience of land on your own account; do you profess to be acquainted with the working of land?—Yes, I do.

388. You said that the main hindrance to small holdings is from the accumulation of land in large estates; why is it more difficult to grant small holdings upon a large estate than upon a small one?—Because the amenity, the pleasure, and the uses of a large estate would be defeated by the conversion of any considerable portion of it into small holdings.

389. I will come to that presently, but I understood you to describe the great difficulty that there was in granting a small holding on a large estate; what is the difficulty?—The difficulty is that owing to the settled condition of the land the proceeds of any sale of the land could not be applied to the personal uses of the owner, and therefore he has a very inferior interest in so dealing with the land.

390. But there are instances, are there not, of small holdings upon large properties at present?—Yes; Lord Bath, for instance, put up in some part of Dorsetshire not long ago some 37 lots in small holdings, and sold every one of them at a good price. Also, as showing the tendency to small holdings upon the same property, I would mention that Lord Bath's agent said lately he had 1,600 acres of land in hand, and he disposed of it by letting it to 70 tenants in place of six who had formerly held the land. That shows how much there is now in favour of having small holdings, having regard to their economic conditions.

391. What has been done on Lord Bath's estate, and Lord Tollemache's estates and others could I presume be done on other large properties even without the change that you contemplate?—What has been done affects only a minute fractional part of the whole extent of land that is held in settlement.

392. You say that accumulation is caused by primogeniture and settlement; how would the abolition of primogeniture and settlement prevent the accumulation of land in the hands of rich men?—Of course the abolition of primogeniture would affect the sentiment which leads men to dispose of their land to their eldest sons. And the law might be carried even further, as it is in other countries, and an absolutely obligatory disposition of the property might be made to all the children, which of course would have the direct effect of distribution.

393. How do you propose to check the accumulation

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

accumulation of land in the hands of rich men in future, even if you abolish primogeniture and settlement?—By laws which would tend to make others who could use the land to greater advantage competitors with them for the possession of it. In France where free sale of land exists it is not found that rich men purchase wide areas to make great estates as they do here.

394. How does cheapening the transfer of land prevent accumulation; might it not facilitate accumulation in new hands?—I should say it would; unaccompanied by the abolition of settlement it might tend to accelerate accumulation certainly.

395. You suggested that the collection of a multiplied number of rents might be regarded as a great nuisance; what has the pleasure of residence in the country to do with that?—The land agents in the country are an extremely important body, and their influence has been invariably opposed to land law reform, which is partly due to the obvious fact that the collection of rent upon a large estate is very much more easy and profitable when it is collected in large sums.

396. May I ask you how does the enjoyment of an estate consist in the number of tenancies being limited?—For one thing the sporting is entirely destroyed by the multiplication of holders, and also such affairs as occasional bankruptcies and difficulties and troubles with tenants are multiplied in proportion to the number of tenants. Also the smaller circumstances of smaller tenants interfere greatly with the pleasures of land-owning.

397. When you say that it would interfere with sport do you contemplate the subdivision of a great park or woods into small holdings?—I contemplate no subdivision by authority but such as would follow from economic causes. Of course, the creation of small holdings would interfere with sport, such as partridge shooting, directly, and also with hunting.

398. Do you think that it would be popular that the deficiency in the profit derived from the land dealt with by the local authorities should fall upon the rates?—No.

399. Would it make an extended system of small holdings widely acceptable if that was to be the result?—I think it would be difficult to get local authorities to undertake dealings with the land which would involve any charging of the rates.

400. But the local authority would have to make the thing pay, would it not?—I suggested that it must either be done by the local authorities or by the Land Commission, and I further suggested reasons which would render it difficult for a local authority to undertake the work. They would, of course, have to make it pay to make it popular.

401. You define the unearned increment as "the increased value of the land added by the action of the community;" what does that mean?—I said, added by the action or influence of the community; that means the improvement of towns, the improvement of roads, and the improved sanitary condition under which the people live, and the manifold advantages that come from persons acting together as a community for the

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

advantage of the community and the neighbourhood,

402. I understand that you would only advocate the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act so as to promote the increase of small holdings, and not for the purpose of enabling tenants to purchase their farms?—I would not exclude tenants; but I think it would be a great mistake to limit the application of its principles to tenants.

403. It is limited in the Irish case, is it not?—It is limited to tenants in the Irish case, because there was no public desire there to increase the number of owners.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*.

404. When you speak of abolishing primogeniture, how can you abolish primogeniture?—Of course you can abolish the law of primogeniture as Lord Halsbury has abolished the law of primogeniture in his Bill which is now before Parliament.

405. Primogeniture is a custom, and the law of primogeniture is only a very small part of it which refers to cases of intestate estates?—The law of primogeniture refers to the cases of intestate estates. I follow Lord Cairns, speaking of it as the law of primogeniture, and in speaking of its abolition; I also rely upon his authority, that the abolition of the law of primogeniture is the correct mode of describing the process now carried out in Lord Halsbury's Bill.

406. When you have been speaking of abolishing primogeniture, you mean abolishing the law of primogeniture and not the custom?—I meant both. It will be for Parliament to consider whether the abolition of the law is sufficient, and whether they would hereafter consider the abolition of the power of leaving land to one son. But as a matter of advocacy, and speaking of the objects of the Free Land League, their object is limited at present to the abolition of the law of primogeniture, which is meant by the Bill now before Parliament.

407. The abolition of the custom of primogeniture would involve, would it not, a statute compelling every testator to leave his land or money in a particular way?—It would involve a statute compelling another distribution.

408. Is not the existence of such a statute in France the main cause of the existence of peasant proprietary in France?—It is one cause no doubt, and the leading cause.

409. Do I understand that the effect of the law in France is that only a certain portion of a man's personalty and realty is allowed to him to be disposed of as he pleases?—That is so.

410. The remainder being divided amongst his nearest relations according to a regular scale which is fixed by the Act?—Yes, there is one share for himself beyond the number of his children.

411. Therefore, in order to prevent a rich man accumulating land and leaving it to his eldest son, it would be necessary to pass some Act of Parliament in England similar to that which exists in France at the present time?—Yes; but it is also possible that there might grow up in England from the changes of law, as there has grown up in France, a feeling which does not always lead to the subdivision of land. Though the

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

the law of France compels sub-division there are numberless cases in which no sub-division occurs.

412. Do you think that the custom of primogeniture in England is the result of the law, or that the law is the embodiment in an Act of Parliament of that custom?—I think they act and re-act upon each other. When the law is changed, and when the State no longer inculcates the grossly immoral doctrine that all a man's landed property should go to one of his children, even although the others may be dependent upon the community, it is quite possible that men may to a certain extent abandon that practice.

413. The cases in which the law of primogeniture comes in force are very exceptional, are they not?—The cases are extremely rare; but this may be said with absolute truth, that the law of primogeniture never operates except to perpetrate an injustice.

414. You will correct me if I am wrong, but it seems to me that the law of primogeniture is the result of a custom which for many many years has been established in this country, and is the embodiment of that custom, and that by aliening the law you will not alter that custom?—You have referred to intestacy as the necessary condition under which the law becomes operative. I admit that those cases are very few, but I say that whenever they occur the law perpetrates an injustice.

415. I wish to ask you a few questions about the comparative yield per acre of the United Kingdom as compared with foreign countries; have you noticed the Agricultural Returns for the last year which have been recently issued?—I do not know that I have; but I am generally acquainted with the Agricultural Returns.

416. At the end of Table No. 17 you will find a heading "Estimated average yield per acre (in English imperial bushels)" under which is shown the yield in different countries of wheat, barley, oats, and maize (of course there is no return for maize so far as the United Kingdom is concerned). Is it not the fact that as to wheat, barley, and oats, it appears that in the United Kingdom for the year 1887 the estimated average yield was 31·97 bushels of wheat, 31·12 of barley, and 34·25 of oats, and that no foreign country approached nearly the same yield?—I do not believe that in any foreign country is the average capital engaged in agriculture so large as in England, where it is still very insufficient; but I beg that you will remember that the statistics with regard to foreign countries, as I showed in my evidence in the case of France, are very incorrect. I would mention further in support of that that in France the calculation is made in this way: there are four departments with 134,000 acres under wheat with a yield of 11 bushels per acre; and those four departments count the same as the four which have 1,213,000 acres, and an average yield of 25 bushels. In the way the accounts are made up, those eight departments show a yield of 18 bushels to the acre, whereas the real yield is 23 bushels to the acre. You must not, therefore, depend upon the statistics given to you with regard to foreign produce. I should also like to point to the case of Jersey, where, in a part of the United Kingdom not particularly favourable to the growth of wheat, the average yield per acre upon 10 acre farms is much larger than that which you mention in those tables.

417. Is the yield per acre from Jersey referred to in any figures which are ascertainable in any statistics?—There is no return that I know that is ascertainable; but I have myself given many weeks to the careful examination of the agriculture of Jersey; and I am quite prepared to state that the average yield of wheat in Jersey is at least 10 or 15 bushels to the acre larger than in England.

418. Does your statement with regard to the method in which the calculation of statistics is made in France, apply to all other foreign countries?—I am not aware as to that; I can only say that seeing that the French statistics were ridiculously inaccurate, I examined into that case, and I found the facts to which I have referred.

419. Let me read these figures to you from the return that I have referred to. The estimated average yield per acre of wheat in the year 1887, in the United Kingdom, was 31·97 bushels; in Australasia it was 13·87; in Hungary 20·62; in Canada 17·87; in Germany 21·93; in India 9·94; and in the United States of America 11·75. What do you say to those figures?—If the produce of peasant farms could be taken by itself in France and Germany, it would show an average production, I believe, at least equal to England; but the laws relating to landlord and tenant are execrably bad in France, and there is no doubt that the yield of wheat and other produce in France is very greatly diminished by the very bad return from the tenanted farms where the condition of the tenants in regard to capital is very miserable.

420. Then do you say that this return is misleading for the purposes of comparison?—It is undoubtedly misleading in its references to foreign countries.

421. Are you acquainted with the condition of agriculture in Cumberland and Westmoreland at all?—Not particularly.

422. Do you know anything about the "statesmen," as they are called in that district?—I know by reading the general character of the agriculture of those counties; and I know that there has been a great reduction in the number of statesmen.

423. Is it not the fact that that those statesmen who are small freeholders sold their properties to the large landowners in good times?—I believe so. I believe Cumberland and Westmoreland have never known other than good times; at least they have not known very bad times.

424. Not so bad as other parts?—No.

425. Was not the reason why those sales were effected, because the owners of the land found that they could invest their capital at a better profit in other occupations?—The size of the statesmen's properties, and the conditions of agriculture on them, were not favourable to the holdings; they were generally most inconvenient as regards the dimensions and conditions, as it appears to me. On the other hand, in Cheshire, where there are some similar conditions in regard to pasture, and where there is certainly greater

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

industry in making butter and cheese, the average size of the holdings has considerably diminished.

426. I wish to ask you one question, with regard to the absolute property which you say the State has in land; I do not quite understand what property you refer to; what property has the State in a freehold estate belonging to A. B.?—The State in the case of a freehold estate has the only absolute ownership; that is the clear definite law of England.

427. That is a legal fiction, is it not?—It is a legal fact. The greatest writers on the law of England lay that down as the initial fact for the student to notice. I am quoting "Williams on Real Property," who says that the first thing a student in English law must do, is to understand that there is no such thing as absolute property in land other than in the State. A person can only hold an estate in land. In the case you put the person holds by permission of the State a freehold estate, which is the highest estate that the law will grant.

428. How does the State ever exercise any rights over land held in that way?—The State, I hold, has grossly neglected the National property in land, owing to the predominance of the landlord's interest in Parliament; but I hope that the State, acting by Parliament, will no longer neglect the National property in land which unquestionably exists by the law of the country.

429. Do you hold that a landowner now having the freehold is not legally entitled to keep his land waste, and to destroy all the trees, and to render his land valueless if he chooses to do so?—He is entitled to do so, so long as the State sanctions it, but if such a practice unfortunately became general on the part of landowners, I am quite sure that you would expect that the State would exercise its rights of absolute property in the land, and interfere to prevent such misuse of the National property.

430. At what date do you say that the State last exercised any of the rights which you now claim for it?—To-day, if a private Bill is passed, taking land, and every day whenever land is taken under compulsory legislation, the State exercises its right as the only absolute proprietor of the land. The incidents to that taking of land of compensation and so on are not necessary incidents. The act of the State in confiscating the land is complete in itself.

431. But steps like those are taken, are they not, under statute, and not under the common law at all?—By statute, by the authority of the State, exercised in Parliament.

432. You refer, I presume to cases under the Lands Clauses and Railways Clauses Consolidation Acts, and so on?—Yes.

433. But before those Acts were passed, had the State any right which it could exercise, or ever did exercise?—The law of England has never been varied; the law of England has from the earliest time always maintained, as it does to-day, that the absolute property in the land belongs to the State, and that individuals can only hold an estate in land, the greatest estate being a freehold estate. All my policy, I should say tends in the direction that the extension of freehold estates should be as wide as possible.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

434. You do not agree that the theory of the property being in the State is a legal fiction?—It is a legal fact; it is written in the law books.

435. With regard to small holdings as against large holdings, would there not be great waste in the matter of roads, fences, buildings, and so on, or in a system of small holdings?—Yes, but under new conditions of agriculture seeing that now there is a great demand from the population for dairy and vegetable produce, that would be more than abundantly made up by the increased industry of small proprietors resulting in increased production. If the small proprietors accomplished anything like what they accomplish in Jersey the value of the produce of this kingdom would be certainly doubled and nearly trebled.

436. Is it not probably the fact that the people in Jersey work a great deal harder than people do in other parts?—It is the rule of peasant proprietors to work harder.

437. If the labourers in this country worked as hard as the peasant proprietors in other countries do, would not the product of the soil be greater?—I think it would, and the produce would consist of articles of greater value. When Lord Derby said that the produce of the soil might be doubled, I think that he was more correct as regards value than he would be perhaps as regards quantity.

Viscount *Curzon.*

438. I believe you said that you were the President of the Free Land League?—Yes.

439. Amongst the objects for which that league has been started I think you said was "the preservation of popular rights over land and water;" can you define what is meant by that?—I understand by that the general rights of common, and the general rights of using water, the general rights of using foot-paths, and accommodation of all sorts valued by the population at large.

440. I understood you to say that by a small holding you meant land to the extent of from one to 20 acres?—I said without any rigid limit that was what I intended.

441. That you thought would be a general statement which would practically strike the average?—Yes.

442. I do not quite understand why you said that large estates prevent the creation of small holdings?—They are collected primarily with the object of preventing small sub-divisions. The enjoyment of a large estate would be seriously interfered with, and, in my opinion, would be annihilated by the conversion of it into small holdings. I can hardly conceive a position more undesirable than that of the landlord of an immense number of small tenants.

443. Do you mean to say that the landlords in every case exist only for the pleasures of sporting, and so on?—No; but it is presumable that every act done by a human being is done for some object or other, and the accumulation of land is, I suppose, not obnoxious to the landowner's taste, or it would have been carried out.

444. But

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Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

444. But is it not the fact now that it is possible for a man who wishes to take a small holding to get one, or would you say that it is an absolutely settled fact that he cannot get one?—You cannot say it is a settled fact; but considering the fact that 52,000,000 acres of land are presumably under settlement, and that over that enormous area no one can put into his own pocket for his own uses the proceeds of the sale of any of that land, it shows how difficult it would be, and indeed how impossible it would be for anyone to say that land is provided in every parish from which small holdings can be obtained.

445. I only speak from what little experience I have been able to gain in this question; but it seems to me that the great difficulty landowners have to contend with is to find purchasers for the land?—Yes.

446. I do not find that there is any unwillingness on the part of landowners in this country to sell the land, but the great difficulty they have is to find people who will buy it?—Yes, but that difficulty arises from their own terms. They wish to sell certain land, but it may not be the land that is desired. If the land is in a favourable condition, and the conditions are favourable, they can sell. For instance, I quoted a case where Lord Bath put up a good many lots, and sold every one of them. It might be that the landlord would be able to sell his land readily enough; but even then he has not the ordinary inducement to sell, because he cannot make use of the proceeds.

447. Is it not the fact that under Lord Cairns' Act the most complete freedom has been given to the landowner, or at any rate, that far more freedom has been given by that Act than by any other Act of Parliament in the way of freeing the land, and is not the result that although an owner of a settled estate who sells his land cannot use the money to spend upon personal objects of his own, he can use it to pay off debts upon the property, which gives him more income in another way, and he can also spend it in the improvement of his farm buildings and things of that sort?—That is so with the consent of the Court, but then the proceedings are somewhat troublesome, and the fact remains that he is not in the position of an ordinary beneficial seller because he cannot appropriate the proceeds of the sale to his own uses. There is another disability affecting settled land, which is this, that the assignee in bankruptcy cannot make a sale; so that those 52,000,000 acres of land are secured against the wholesome operation of the law of insolvency.

448. You made one statement which I must say took me by surprise; I am not for a minute contesting it, but I wish to ask you this question upon it; you stated that four-fifths of the United Kingdom is shown by the return to Lord Derby to be in the hands of 7,000 persons?—Yes, about 7,000 persons.

449. Is there any other authority than that return for that statement?—There can be no authority so good, because this return, which is generally known as the New Domesday Book, is the latest and most voluminous return having reference to the land of England.

450. In what year was that made?—1874 and 1875.

Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

451. Now I want to press you to give me an answer to this question, which I think is of great importance, considering the evidence that you have given, and it is this: Is there any other country whose laws with regard to the tenure and disposal of land you would wish to see initiated in this country in any degree?—I spoke of the German law as being the best, but there there is a power of settlement exercised in a very limited degree applying now out of the 80,000,000 acres of Prussia only to 5,000,000 acres. That is a law which even to the very limited extent to which it is exercised in Germany, I could not advocate, therefore, though I referred to the German law as the best in my knowledge in the world, it is not such as I could entirely approve.

452. Then I should not be justified in saying that you would advocate the German system being applied to this country?—No. With regard to transfer and registration of title, I should be greatly delighted if we could carry it now, so far as the Prussian system; that would be a great advantage to the country, I think.

453. Mr. Lowther asked you a question with regard to the waste on estates which would necessarily follow, if the present large farms were to be sub-divided up into small holdings. Supposing that there was any system of small holdings in vogue, who would be responsible for the buildings and fences?—I think the great homesteads upon many of the large farms in the country form a very serious obstacle to dealing with the land in the way I should be inclined to suggest. I refer to barns which are to a certain extent obsolete, and other buildings which have cost an enormous deal of money, and with regard to which it would be very difficult to suggest what policy should be pursued, except pulling them down in many cases.

454. Therefore the money sunk in them for the benefit of the old system would be thrown away under the new system you propose?—I should propose nothing that did not flow from economic causes; I make no proposal that would be inimical to the existing owners of land. I think it would be a great mistake ever to propose a measure of land reform that was not for the benefit of the proprietors as well as of the community at large.

455. With regard to the question of private landowners, do I understand you to favour the application of the Allotment Act of last year as regards small holdings?—No, I do not.

456. I ask the question because I understand you are in favour of some further legislation dealing with the case of small holdings as regards private landowners?—Yes; but I spoke of public lands, mainly.

457. But I understand you to refer also to private landowners; of course in dealing with the land of England you must take into account the large amount of land in the hands of private landowners?—Yes.

458. How would you propose to deal with that land if the owner did not want to sell?—There would be no hardship or difficulty in giving powers to take private lands by compulsion for the advantage of the community, or by

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Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

exchanging them as I have said for public land where it was for the convenience of both parties. Of course I hold that private lands are subject to the convenience of the State, and must be surrendered for objects of State policy.

459. Do you think that there is a tendency still upon the part of the majority of the landowners in this kingdom to consolidate farms?—No, I cannot say that there is; I think they have discovered the error that I referred to as existing in 1871, and that the tendency is quite the contrary. I could mention several large estates on which the policy of the proprietor was distinctly otherwise, but who is now desirous of diminishing the average size of the holdings on his property.

460. Do you think that it would be possible to lay down any hard-and-fast rule by legislation that in all counties in England (to take one of the countries in the kingdom for example) a system of small holdings should be created; do you think that would be beneficial to the agricultural interest?—I would have no compulsory legislation of any sort with regard to the creation or defining the size of any holdings; I wish all that to flow from economic causes. The largest farm I know of is in France, near Tours, and consists of 3,800 acres, and I do not see why if that exists under the conditions of the French law such farms as that existing from purely economic causes should not exist in our country.

461. You spoke about the boundless wealth of France which has enabled her people to discharge the National obligations which have lately been laid upon them in a way that has been very admirable; I would like to ask whether that is not due very much to their climate which is far more favourable than ours?—Most of the honourable Members in comparing the two countries have dealt with the question of the production of wheat; I should not be disposed to say that the climate of France was better on the whole for the production of wheat than that of some parts of England. I think if I had to engage in a race between competitors to see which could produce the greatest quantity of wheat on 1,000 acres I would prefer to select my plot in England rather than in France.

462. I understood you to say that land conferred certain powers upon landowners; what powers does the possession of land in England now confer upon landowners?—I said that land might be treated differently from personal property, because it conferred upon the owners exceptional powers.

463. What powers does it confer?—Powers of many kinds. It must be observed that persons must live upon the land; and it is not possible for a man to be a proprietor of a large estate without having a great number of persons more or less dependent upon him. His influence over them, and over their actions, and their lives, must under any condition be considerable, and also his own dignity and importance in the community in which he lives must be enhanced by the possession of land.

464. Do you think that that state of things is disadvantageous to the good of the community?—Strictly speaking I think that that community would be most happy in which the condition of

Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

landowning approaches most nearly to the state in which no man has more land than he can occupy himself. I do not say that should be a cast-iron rule; but that should be the condition to which we should endeavour to make further approaches.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

465. Unfortunately I did not hear the beginning of your evidence, but I may no doubt take it that you have made extensive inquiries into the whole question of small holdings; do you find that there is now an increased desire on the part of the landlords to grant small holdings?—As to allotments, certainly there is; but as to small holdings I think not generally, although on some estates, for their own advantages, there have been changes made by landlords, but not to the extent that would comply with the demands of public policy.

466. In your investigations do not you find that the holders of small holdings pay up their rents very regularly, and do not ask for an extension of time for the payment of rent?—I think that is generally the case.

467. Do you not think that in these bad times that is naturally an encouragement to landlords to grant small holdings?—Yes; but then these small holdings are generally granted upon the condition of tenancy from year to year, and that is a very undesirable condition, especially for the interests of the State.

468. Do you find that it is in one county particularly, or in one part of England, that leases are only granted from year to year?—I think that there has been generally throughout England in recent years an increase of letting without leases.

469. No doubt you have gone into the whole question in the various districts in England; have you visited the eastern counties?—Not for some time.

470. Have you visited Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk and Norfolk?—Yes; I am rather intimately acquainted with the arrangements and conditions of one or two estates in Cambridgeshire.

471. Have you visited the estates of Lord Tollemache in Suffolk and Cheshire, celebrated for small holdings?—I have only read of the circumstances of those estates; but that applies to an extremely small area of land, though of course it is a most philanthropic and beneficial concern.

472. Do you find in your visits to different parts that there is the greatest demand for pasture land, or for arable land?—Of course where land is used purely for pasture, there would be a natural tendency not to have farms very small, and where it is used for keeping stock, as in Cumberland and Westmoreland, as the honourable Member for Westmoreland was pointing out just now, there has been a diminution in the number of the "statesmen," which is no doubt due to the superior economy of grazing and the larger head of stock upon a wider area.

473 Lord Curzon asked you a question about buildings; did I understand you to say that you advocated large barns and large buildings being pulled down?—No, I said that the large barns, many of which are obsolete, would create a great

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

a great difficulty, and be to some extent an embarrassment to the landowner.

474. Do not you find that now that the tenants of small holdings are able to receive compensation for buildings they have within the last year or two been putting up buildings of their own accord?—I was not aware of that; my experience has been that generally these buildings have been entirely erected at the expense of the landlord.

475. You have not seen or heard that buildings are being put up by tenants, knowing as they do that now they can receive compensation by law?—I should assume that that would be the case on small holdings in future.

476. From your experience have you found that there is high farming carried on in small holdings?—Yes, very industrious farming; such farming as may be best illustrated by the farming of Jersey, where it is not at all a very uncommon thing for a man to spend 20 *l.* an acre in manuring for a crop.

477. And do you find that they keep a large amount of stock per acre?—They keep a large amount of stock per acre on small farms undoubtedly, that is illustrated by the cow population of Holland or Denmark as compared with England.

Sir *George Campbell.*

478. As regards the general question of the depression under which small holders are suffering through the bad state of agriculture and so on, is it not the case that these reports which have been quoted have reference to the last few years during which there has been depression on the part of agriculturists and everyone else all over the world on account of the change of values?—Yes; in this country if we had a system of small holdings there would undoubtedly be less depression, especially for this reason, which I was not able to mention early in my evidence, that consumers and producers would be brought more closely together. The best figures that are extant show for example that the home producer receives now for potatoes 15,000,000 *l.* sterling, whereas the consumer pays 32,000,000 *l.* sterling for that product; and in the case of fruit, the home producer receives 7,000,000 *l.* for fruit, while the consumer pays for it 20,000,000 *l.* Then again for milk the producer receives 17,000,000 *l.*, whereas the consumer pays 37,000,000 *l.*

479. That is not exactly the question that I was asking. My question was rather whether these reports refer to a state of things which may possibly be temporary; that is to say, the recent depression which has affected all occupations, and especially the occupation of agriculture?—The depression has been observed in all countries in Europe, and in all countries of the world.

480. Is it not the case that the farmers in Great Britain have suffered very much, and the landlords have suffered very much, especially those whose estates are heavily burdened; and that as regards the small cultivating owners of farms combining as they do the losses both of farmers and of landlords, their state is naturally

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

under the present circumstances unusually bad?—That is so.

481. Then as regards the general question with which you open your evidence to-day, is it not the case that in recent years great facilities for the transfer of estates have been given, and that the law has rendered it possible, for example, for owners of entailed estates to transfer their estates under certain conditions as to the disposal of the money. As the result of recent legislation is not the present state of things such that estates are brought very freely into the market, and that the difficulty is rather to find a purchaser for an estate than to find a seller?—The law has not been altered in regard to enabling the owner of a settled estate to receive the proceeds of the sale and apply them to his own uses, and therefore he has an inferior interest as compared with an ordinary seller of land.

482. Has not the law been so far altered as to enable an owner of a limited estate to sell that estate?—Yes, together with a troublesome process in conjunction with the court; he may undoubtedly under Lord Cairns' Act part with any portion of his estate except the mansion house itself.

483. Has it not been your experience, under the peculiar circumstances of the present state of things, that the difficulty is rather to find a purchaser than to find a seller for an estate?—I would hardly say that with reference to land in a convenient position, and where the circumstances are convenient; that, I think, was illustrated by the case that I mentioned just now of Lord Bath, who, the other day, put up several lots for sale, and sold every lot because the land happened to be convenient land and in a convenient position.

484. What is the practical effect of the present land law in such a case as this:—Suppose that a large owner desires to sell his estate, and he completes his title and registers it under the present Land Registration Act, has he, under the present law, complete facility for selling his property in various small holdings so that the titles to these small holdings shall not be afterwards complicated?—No, because his title may be a very costly one. It depends, of course, upon what title he gives; he may give a superficial title to the person who purchases a small holding which would be a perfectly good title to that person, but if he, in his turn, desires to sell the estate, that is the portion that he had bought of it, a purchaser might require to investigate the whole title of the original landlord.

485. But I am assuming that the large owner completed his title, and has it registered under the Registration Act as an absolute title; and what I am asking is, he having once registered that perfect title, does the present state of the law enable him to deal freely in the way of dividing it into small holdings, so as to enable the future owners of those small holdings to deal perfectly freely with their small holdings as regards title?—Yes, he could give an absolute title; that is the same title that he has himself.

486. Do you think that the present state of the law would enable the holder to keep those titles clear and to transfer them from one person

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

to another with perfect facility?—If all the land of England had been registered, of course there would be facilities; but, as a fact, landlords do not register; according to the past rate there would not be universal registration under 1,000 years.

487. I am assuming the case of a landlord who desires to complete his title and to register it under the Land Registration Act; does the law, as it at present exists, enable such a landlord, where he has registered an absolute title, to sell holdings to small holders, and to give such an absolute estate to those small holders that, in the future, they will be able to deal with it with perfect facility?—Yes, but that is done at such enormous expense, and by such a dilatory process, that the landlords do not take advantage of the present facilities.

488. But I am asking you on the assumption that he did take advantage of the present facilities for registration?—If he did take advantage of registration, then undoubtedly the result which you referred to would follow.

489. If a landlord is willing to go to the expense of registering his estate with an absolute title, and he sells it in small holdings and gives the same title to the holder of a small holding, does the present law in England give him the same facility of dealing with his land as an owner of land has in Prussia at the present moment?—Certainly not.

490. Why not?—Because under the Land Transfer Act of 1875, if he desires to part with his interest in a small holding, it would not be possible for the purchaser to conduct the proceedings by himself.

491. You mean that he must employ a lawyer?—Yes, at present he must. But there are other processes which would render it practically prohibitory.

492. What processes do you refer to?—The mode of dealing with it; the notices to be given and other circumstances that are rendered necessary by the existence of settlement, in order to protect the possibly long terms of interest in the estate.

493. You told us that in Germany a man can transfer his property at the rate of 10 *s.* per cent.?—Yes.

494. Whereas in England it costs as much as 10 *l.* per cent.?—Yes.

495. Do you mean to say that if the title of an estate was once complete, a transfer would cost as much as 10 *l.* for every 100 *l.* worth of land?—That is the scale charged at present, but I do not see why it should be so in the future; I hope that in future we shall not have higher fees than they have in Germany.

496. Under the present law are the expenses as high as 10 *l.* for every 100 *l.* worth of property?—I am quoting from the Report of the present Assistant Registrar of the Land Registry, and his figures are—English fees for sale or mortgage, two parties only, 10 *l.* for land of the value of 100 *l.*

497. Now as regards what you desire to see, namely, increased facilities for the transfer to other hands of the glebe and ecclesiastical and Crown lands; I understood you to express an opinion in favour of the complete transfer of the ownership rather than letting it out on permanent tenure; is that so?—Yes; I should advocate the transfer of the ownership as far as it can be done without interference with the absolute property in the State. The State cannot alienate the absolute ownership of any land.

498. With the object of giving facilities for small holdings, is not a permanent tenure of the land subject to a payment of fixed rent, or rent determined upon fixed principles, more favourable to a small holder than buying the land out and out, because in the former case the land would come to him very much cheaper, would it not?—I should think, as a general rule, the small owner would feel a greater interest and employ greater and more productive industry upon an estate on which he had the highest possible title that the State could give.

499. Would it not be necessary for him to find much more money for the purchase of the land if he is going to buy it out and out?—In that case I should see no objection to his having it on lease; but I mentioned the freehold as being preferable.

500. Having regard to England being a maritime country, with a great extent of Colonial possessions, and great facilities for going abroad, should you not say that the condition of this country is such that a man who has money to enable him to purchase a valuable freehold would be more likely to go abroad if he were obliged to pay the full price for land in England?—I do not think so. If I may take for example the Eastern States of America, the character of the agriculture has entirely changed there during the last 25 years; but you do not find that men desert the Eastern States of America and go West, because the character of agriculture has changed as regards the production of dairy and other articles of produce of that sort.

501. When you say that, I must ask you as a matter of fact is it not notorious that the Eastern States are going bodily West; that men are leaving their properties to take up lots in the other States, and that the Irish are coming in behind to occupy them?—What I meant was that those States are not deserted in consequence of the change of agriculture.

502. But is it not the case that the proprietors in the Eastern States do habitually turn their estates into money, by selling them in order to go West?—I do not think we are likely to suffer in this country for want of population.

503. But may we not suffer from the want of people who are willing to spend large sums of money upon the land?—If we open the land to freedom I do not think we are likely to suffer for want of people who would make the best use of it in the way of cultivation.

504. In the case of glebe land and the other land which you alluded to, so long as they are appropriated to certain purposes it is necessary that the income should go to those purposes. Would there not be greater facilities under an arrangement whether under a municipal authority or by means of a permanent lease, under which the actual permanent value of land should still be devoted to the purposes for which it was intended, and that the tenant should come in as a permanent

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

permanent tenant who would have all the inducements which ownership affords to induce him to cultivate, and that at the same time, he should not be required to find so large an amount of capital as would necessarily be the case if he was to acquire the ownership?—I should be extremely glad to see these changes conducted by the local authority if it were found to be practically possible.

505. That is that the tenant should hold upon permanent terms, the terms including full and complete compensation?—I do not think that the example of the Corporation of Liverpool has been very favourable to that view. Of course it would be an advantage that the changes should be carried out in the best possible way, either by leasing or by sale.

506. Is it not the case that complete freedom of transfer of land might very probably lead to greater accumulation of land in the hands of plutocrats, than we have won now?—I think it would be so unless you have laws prohibiting the settlement of land; that is prohibiting accumulation by settlement.

507. Surely accumulation is one thing, and settlement is another?—Accumulation of land would be deprived of its greatest sustenance when a man could no longer settle it.

508. Do you think that plutocrats would not desire to accumulate land just as they accumulate money?—It is not the case in France; they do not accumulate there.

509. Did I not understand you to say that in France there are considerable properties?—There are considerable properties in France, but the proportion in France is not the same as it is in England.

510. I do not quite understand whether you would go so far as to penalise, or by law place under restrictions and disabilities the holding of very large properties?—The Chairman used the word "penalise," and I rather avoided it, but I would certainly by graduated fees upon transfer, and graduated succession duty upon inheritance, and by the abolition of settlement diminish the tendency that proprietors now have to accumulate land.

511. You are aware, no doubt, that in America the holding of large estates is very unpopular, and as I have heard it expressed the large landowners are pecked at, and measures have been taken by which the large owners who held great estates under old deeds have been induced to part with those estates; can you tell us whether in the American States there is any law against this accumulation of property?—I am not aware as to that. In some States of the Union I know there is no law, but there is the same freedom as in England, and if the United States take no such steps as I have been indicating to-day they will have to face the same grave social condition that we have in England in regard to accumulation of land.

512. With regard to the produce of small farms you told us the produce which you think small farms are best calculated to produce, and I was rather taken by surprise by your quoting wheat as one of the products. Have you any statistics to show the produce per acre in Jersey or Guernsey is so much larger than in any part of this country?—I only speak from my own observation to which I have attached, if I may say so, some importance in the matter; but Mr. Thornton, whom you probably know at the India Office, and who was a very skilled economist, wrote after much observation in Jersey and Guernsey, very strongly to show that in Jersey the average production of wheat rarely fell under 40 bushels per acre.

513. Can you give any statistics to show that that really is so?—The best accounts I know of are those of writers such as Mr. Thornton and others who have visited the islands.

514. Now, as regards the question of compensation, do you think that the present law does sufficiently enable a small farmer to put up buildings, and to do everything of that kind, with the assurance that he shall have compensation; is the present law sufficient as regards requiring a tenant to get the previous consent of the landlord?—I think that the present Agricultural Holdings Act is very unfair to the sitting tenant who may have notice of a rise in his rent, and may be obliged to quit the holding before he can obtain compensation.

515. As regards buildings, do you think the present law is sufficient?—I think there are certain things which a tenant ought not to do without the landlord's consent; it would be rather hard upon the landlord if a tenant should be able to plant fruit trees, for instance, to an unlimited extent, and to obtain full value for them from the landlord without having obtained his consent to planting them.

516. My question was with regard to buildings necessary to equip the farm; do you think the present law is sufficient with regard to them?—I think that with regard to buildings, unless they were strictly necessary for the equipment of the farm, there is *primâ facie* ground for obtaining the previous consent of the landlord.

517. Is it not the case that the transfer of land is heavily taxed in France?—Yes, very heavily.

518. Now as regards the State banks in Germany, at what interest do the State banks lend?—In Germany 10 or 15 years ago the rate of interest was 5 per cent., with half per cent. added for a sinking fund.

519. In this country, if titles were complete and easy, is it not the case that private banking enterprise is such that such loans would be managed at a lower rate than that?—Yes; 5 per cent. would be quite sufficient, including repayment of capital in a certain term.

520. Is there any system of combination of banks in England, as there is in Scotland, under which certain interest is prescribed for first-class land mortgages?—I think there is not; but undoubtedly there might be some such power given by the State. Certain banks, for instance, might obtain charters or authority from the State which they could use in connection with State funds for purposes of this sort.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

521. With regard to the amount of the glebe lands, I think you said that you calculated that the whole of their value in England and Wales is

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

now 400,000 *l.*?—Having regard to the very great value of much of the land, and a considerable part of it being, in my opinion, orchard land and general accommodation land, I reckon that 2 *l.* an acre would not be an excessive value to put upon it.

522. Have you seen a Return of 1887 relating to glebe land, which gives the rental of glebe land in England and Wales as 908,281 *l.*?—I have not seen that Return.

523. And the acreage is given as 659,548 acres for England and Wales?—Speaking with great deference as to the accuracy of any Parliamentary Return, I am surprised at the extent.

524. This Return seems to me to be a matter of some interest, because the acreage of glebe in every parish for the whole of the kingdom is put down in this Return (it is Return No. 307 of 1887), and according to this the amount would be at least double what you have mentioned?—Yes.

525. I believe that this Return gives exactly what you said was wanting, and it gives the information the Chairman asked for, as regards the size of the glebe land, and it is therefore a very valuable Return?—It is clearly an extremely valuable Return, and I observe that it is very recent, namely. 1887; I certainly was not aware of its existence.

526. With regard to Crown lands, would you be inclined to sell Crown land outright to small holders, or to the present tenants, or would you be inclined to transfer them over to the Land Commissioners, to whom you have referred, or to the local authority?— The management of them is now so extremely wasteful (I speak with great respect to the Commissioners) of the public money in the department that we have to maintain, that any reasonable disposition of these lands would be a great advantage to the public. I do not think it would be at all an extravagant estimate to say that 50,000 *l.* a year might be saved to the public by the abolition of the Woods and Forests Department, and the disposition of the lands in some way.

527. Do you know anything of the administration of Delamere Forest in Cheshire?—I know of the existence of it, but I know nothing of its administration.

528. With regard to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and their scheme for selling land, they give the right of pre-emption, do they not, to the cultivating tenants, in selling their land?—I believe they do so under their scale; I feel sure they do so.

529. In extending Lord Ashbourne's Act to England would you give the same right of pre-emption to cultivating tenants of say 20 or 30 acres, as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners give to their tenants?—Certainly; subject to the limit that I have mentioned, that no more than 500 *l.* should be advanced upon each holding.

530. How would you propose to settle the price; would you settle it by a valuation of the farm in the case of the purchase of the farm by the small holder?—If it were done by the Land Commission it would have to be dealt with by valuation.

531. Would you advocate its being done by the Land Commission at a valuation rather than

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

under the present system of sale by auction to the highest bidder; is that so?—The sale by auction would present very many advantages, but I think the existing tenants might have some opportunity of making the purchase for themselves, providing that the holding did not exceed the size and value which it was within the power of the Land Commission to deal with.

532. How would you decide whether the value of the farm is to be determined by valuation by the authorities, or whether it is to be set up to auction?—There would be an alternative mode. Crown lands are let by tender at present, and very often great loss occurs, because the Crown is obliged to take the highest tender. For instance, one of the Commissioners gave evidence not long ago that the Crown had lost 7,000 *l.*, because on a difference of only 60 *l.* in the tenders, he was bound to take the highest tender.

533. I am referring rather to what the present holder of the estate would do; would you give to the present holder the right of pre-emption?—I think that would be fair, and to the advantage of the State.

534. Then would you leave it to the Land Commission, or whatever the authority might be, to value the farm, and offer it first of all to the cultivating tenant?—Yes, if I found that that was an equitable mode of dealing with it.

535. I want to ask you one question with regard to the Royal Commission of 1882. I think you said that their choice of witnesses was not such as you would have wished; do you remember at all who the witnesses were for Wales?—No, I have no recollection. What I said was, that the case for small holdings would have been better presented had they called a larger number of witnesses who were interested in that particular class.

536. Are you aware that the witnesses who were called to represent Wales consisted of the largest landowner in North Wales, and the agents of six of the largest estates in South Wales?—I was not aware of that; but I should say it is quite in keeping with what I imagined to be the character of the evidence before that Commission.

537. And are you aware that the Assistant Commissioners made no inquiry of the peasants, but simply of the Poor Law officers in Wales?—I am not aware of those facts.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

538. Mr. Lowther asked you just now if you could give some comparative statistics as to the production of wheat in France and England; and he quoted some statistics which seemed to tell very heavily against France as a wheat-producing country. But is it not the fact that the chief product of the small holdings in France consists of what we should call domestic articles of produce, such as eggs, poultry, and butter?—Yes.

539. And, as a consequence, is it not the case that those owners not only supply themselves, but that they have a surplus which they are able to sell and export to this country?—Yes, small farms present great and undoubted advantages for the production of such articles as poultry and eggs.

540. Therefore

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

540. Therefore any examination based upon the production of wheat would be quite misleading as to the value of small holdings?—It would be quite misleading as to their produce.

541. Therefore the large number of questions that have been put to you as regards the production of wheat in England and in France must not be taken as being evidence as to the comparative value of the holdings in the two countries?—Certainly not.

542. You have told us that you hold very strongly that the absolute ownership of the land cannot be parted with by the State, and you have been asked what evidence of ownership in the State you can show. Do you not regard the land-tax as resting upon the land, and in fact taxes generally which rest upon the land, as an evidence of ownership?—Yes; the receipt for taxes upon land would be evidence of ownership, and is received in most countries as valuable evidence in that direction.

543. Is the land-tax in your judgment the equivalent of rent paid to the State as the owner of the land?—I believe that is its character.

544. That would be a very strong proof pointing distinctly to the State ownership of land, and would you not regard tithes, which are also national property, as being an evidence of the ownership of the State; although they are allocated to a particular purpose of the State, namely the State Established Church?—To some extent; but I regard the unquestioned and undoubted condition of the law as paramount.

Mr. *Chaplin*.

545. In regard to a question which Mr. Halley Stewart put to you just now as to wheat not being a criterion of the production of the small holdings, let me ask you, would you consider potatoes any criterion?—May I ask you in what connection you mean?

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

546. I understand that you agree with Mr. Halley Stewart that the production of wheat upon small holdings was not to be taken as any criterion of the relative produce of small and large holdings?—No; what I meant was that the production of wheat on small holdings would be undoubted evidence of their producing capacity, and I do contend that the production of wheat on certain small holdings is very much greater than it is on large holdings; and the same would hold good with regard to potatoes of course.

547. But is it not the case that the production of wheat per acre in almost every country abroad is much smaller than it is in England?—Yes, but it is much greater on the small holdings than it is upon the large holdings in France.

548. Taking the acreage of France which consists mostly of small holdings?—Pardon me, there is the great fallacy; it is generally contended that the Fre ch are a nation of small holders. Undoubtedly the small holdings are very numerous, but the extent of land so held is vastly inferior to that which is not held in small holdings.

549. I may put it in this way: Comparing this country with a country where there are more small holdings, the production per acre here is much greater than in France, is it not?—Yes; but that is due partly to the mistaken basis upon which the reckoning of the French statistics proceeds.

550. And the same would apply with regard to barley, I suppose?—Yes; the mistaken basis of calculation applies there too.

551. And would you say the same with regard to potatoes?—I have no doubt it is the same with regard to potatoes.

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Tuesday, 30th April 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir George Campbell.	Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Chaplin.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Cobb.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS, a Member of the Committee, further Examined.

Chairman.

552. I THINK on the last occasion when you were called you had completed your evidence as to the existing state of things, and as to the causes which, in your opinion, had led to the diminution of small holdings, and also you had given evidence as to the advantage of small holdings; now I have to ask you whether you have any suggestions to make for the creation of small holdings?—I have proposed a scheme for the creation of small holdings which is embodied in the Bill called the Small Holdings Bill, which has been before Parliament for several years, and is introduced again this Session; I think that scheme would meet the case.

553. Will you explain what that scheme is?—To explain the provisions of the Bill shortly, the object is to give powers to a representative county authority, say, for instance, the district council, to purchase land or an estate and divide the same into small holdings, say up to 40 or 50 acres. These holdings would be sold on certain conditions to cultivators requiring them (I will explain the terms of sale directly). The local authority would borrow the money from the State at the lowest rate possible. For the purpose of my explanation let us suppose that they borrow at 3 per cent.; as a matter of fact they would borrow at less, but I may take 3 per cent. for the purpose of my explanation. The purchaser of the small holding would be required to find one-fourth of the purchase-money, and the remaining three-fourths the local authority would advance, as a permanent loan, charging the small holder on this three-fourths 1 per cent. more than they (the local authority) pay the State; that is, supposing that the local authority borrowed at 3 per cent. they would charge the purchaser 4 per cent. This interest would be a first and permanent charge on the land in the form of a quit-rent (or whatever you may call it; it would be an unimprovable rent) payable to the local authority. I propose that the purchaser should pay down one-fourth of the purchase-money, but the proportion might be altered to a fifth, or more or less as was thought expedient.

Chairman—continued.

554. In any case, according to your proposal, the local authority would leave out on a permanent mortgage at least three-fourths of the purchase price?—Yes, at least three-fourths of the purchase price.

555. And the local authority would receive 1 per cent. more than the rate which it paid to the State for the loan?—Yes.

556. According to your proposal there is no sinking fund, as I understand?—No.

557. Therefore the tenant, as we must call him, would never become the absolute unencumbered owner of the land?—No.

558. There would always be three-fourths of the capital value of the land on loan to him from the local authority?—Yes, which he would have no power to pay off or they to call in; and they would have no power to raise the interest upon it, but the interest would be a permanent charge upon the holding.

559. That proposal involves a new principle, does it not; it is different from anything with which we are at the present time acquainted?—Yes, in England; I propose later on to explain something like it (but not exactly like it) that exists in other countries.

560. Neither in England nor in Ireland have advances been made upon that principle, have they, hitherto?—Not that I am aware of.

561. In cases where ownership has been created the payment has been for a fixed term of years, and a sinking fund has been established to pay off all the money in that term, and at the expiry of that term the occupier becomes the absolute owner?—Yes.

562. But in your scheme he never becomes the absolute owner?—Practically he would be the absolute owner, subject to the payment of this quit-rent; that is to say, he can sell or devise, always subject to this quit-rent.

563. Will you explain to the Committee what is your object in proposing this new arrangement?—The object is, that it not only protects the ratepayers but will ultimately work to their advantage. The arguments generally urged against

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Chairman—continued.

against State assistance to enable cultivators to purchase land are, mainly, that such assistance involves risks to the ratepayers, and also that the general body of the people should not be called upon to assist a few in this manner, or, as it is expressed, to "set men up in business." Those objections are overcome by this scheme. The 1 per cent. difference in the rate of interest I propose should be invested by the local authority, and if, for the purposes of argument, they invested it at 3 per cent. compound interest it would in 47 years clear off the debt to the State, and leave the local authority (that is, the ratepayers of the parish) in possession of well secured ground-rents or quit-rents for ever. The cultivator would be practically the owner, with powers to sell or devise the holding, always subject to this quit-rent.

564. According to your proposal the local authority would be the permanent owner of a perpetual ground-rent of 4 per cent. upon three-fourths of the purchase-money?—Yes, ultimately.

565. You defend your proposal on the ground that by this means a profit might be ultimately looked for by the ratepayers?—Yes.

566. Is that the only advantage which your proposal has?—No, there are other advantages. It has advantages over purchasing land out-and-out, because I consider it inadvisable to draw capital away from the land. It is better for the purchaser and for the land that the money should be retained to be used for working and stocking the farm, than that he should pay the whole purchase-money or any considerable portion of it, which would be so much capital drawn from the land. I have already given evidence as to how small proprietors are hampered through having paid for their holdings high prices, being thereby often left with insufficient money, or often with no money at all, for the purpose of working and cultivating their land.

567. That is an argument in favour of a loan being made to them in place of their being required to find the whole value themselves, but it is no argument, is it, for leaving that loan permanently on the land, and not allowing a sinking fund to act to their advantage?—Yes; but I think it due to the ratepayers, who have lent an individual their credit, and thereby enabled him to acquire the land, say at 4 per cent. (a price which he could not get from any private individual), that they should have some form of profit in return for the credit they have lent, and the 1 per cent. difference in the rates of interest which I propose will ultimately work in favour of the ratepayers of the district, to the relief of the rates, or in some other way, and thereby give an advantage to the ratepayers who have enabled the cultivator to become the owner of the land.

568. Could not the same result be obtained by increasing the annual payment to be made by the tenant, at the same time allowing him to repay the whole of the purchase-money in a certain fixed number of years?—That would allow the purchaser ultimately to become the absolute freeholder, free from all conditions as to sub-letting and sub-dividing, and would leave the general

Chairman—continued.

body of taxpayers with no power over the land all of which I think objectionable.

569. Then do I understand that that is the second argument in favour of your plan, namely, that by giving the local authority this mortgage over the land you would also give them power to ensure the fulfilment of the conditions upon which the land is to be held?—Yes. I have already dwelt at some length upon the evil of the power of mortgaging on the part of small proprietors. I hold that that power, having regard to the extent to which it is used throughout the Continent, and to a great degree in England, is really the prime drawback to the success of a peasant proprietary, and I feel certain that unless this danger is recognised and guarded against, any scheme of peasant proprietary will fail. Under the plan proposed, the small proprietor first of all is not likely to want to borrow, because he has not impoverished his small capital by paying all the purchase-money for his land. But whether he wishes to borrow or not, he offers no temptation to money-lenders, except to a very limited extent; that is, to the extent of one-fourth of the purchase-money, because his holding is practically mortgaged (though it has none of the evils of mortgage) to the extent of three-fourths of the purchase-money. Moreover, there are no law expenses; there is the smallest possible rate of interest; there is no liability to foreclosure; and although you might call it a mortgage, it has none of the drawback and evils of a mortgage.

570. But does not that result from any proposal to lend the purchase-money in whole or in part; that is to say, if the local authority finds the money, or a large proportion of the money, a cultivator will not require to borrow to provide for his purchase; but that applies just the same to a tenant under the Ashbourne Act, who pays off the whole of the capital in 49 years, as it would to a tenant under your system, where the owner, while paying as much as a tenant under the Ashbourne Act, would still be only the absolute owner of one-fourth of his property?—That is quite true; but I cannot see the justice of lending the purchaser the whole of the purchase-money, as under Lord Ashbourne's Act, and thereby perhaps creating some risk on the part of the ratepayers or taxpayers. I consider that the municipality or the ratepayers should have some return for the advantages which they have given to the purchaser. My scheme is, so to speak, a municipalisation of the land.

571. When your scheme has been fully carried out, the municipality would be the owner of the rent of three-fourths of the land?—They would be the rent receivers of so much per cent. on three-fourths of the land, having no power over the owner further than demanding that this charge should be paid. The owner would have the right to sell or devise it subject to this charge; he would be able to do everything but sub-divide it or sub-let it. He must not sub-let, because our object is not to create a number of impecunious landlords, but to secure a number of continuous cultivating ownership, an object which Lord Ashbourne's Act, so far as I am aware, will not secure.

572. Your municipality or county authority would take the place of the existing landlord,

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Chairman – continued.

would they not?—They would be simply quit-rent receivers, the money being received through tax gatherers in the ordinary way. They would have no responsibility of management or any difficulties of that kind, or any duties which corporate bodies are not so well able to undertake.

573. Their rent would be very nearly a rack-rent, would it not, according to your proposal?—No.

574. Would it not be nearly a rack-rent, because you propose that the tenant should only be absolute owner of one-fourth of the whole value at the outset?—He is absolute owner of the whole property, subject to this charge which we may call a quit-rent.

575. But the charge is a charge calculated upon three-fourths of the original value of the property?—It is the interest on the value of three-fourths of the property.

576. Therefore if the price of the land went down the tenant might have to pay an absolute rack-rent, or even more than a rack rent?—Yes, but if the price of land went up (as I think we are entitled to say it does in every instance under small cultivating ownership), the charge would ultimately become very small comparatively. For instance, supposing a man bought under this system 400 *l.* worth of land, for which the local authority advanced him 300 *l.*, if, by superior cultivation, personal skill, and any improvements he chose to make (and he certainly would make improvements if the land were his own), he could make the land worth 700 *l.*, he could sell it in the market for 700 *l.*, always subject to the payment of this 4 per cent. on the 300 *l.*, which charge would never be increased.

577. But supposing that your scheme had been carried out 20 years ago, since that time the average value of land has fallen perhaps from 30 to 50 per cent.?—That is probably so.

578. Now suppose, also, which would certainly be the case, that a proportion of your tenants did not succeed, then their land would be thrown upon the local authority at a value which might be 25 to 30 per cent. above the value which they could get for it?—I am not prepared to admit that; indeed I am prepared to dispute it by saying that small holdings during the last 20 years have not decreased in value to that extent, if at all. I do not say that in certain districts there may not have been such a diminution, but taking the country generally, small holdings, that is, holdings of say 50 acres and below, have not depreciated in value, if we may take rent as the standard, to anything like the extent that I understand is suggested, if at all. If, however, you go back further in the past and inquire what would be the result if the scheme had been largely put in force 47 years ago, then I say the result would be that the municipal authority and the County Councils of to-day would be the receivers of quit-rents so large that their rates would be materially lessened, and if the scheme had been carried out extensively enough they would be almost able to do without rates at all. I may say that the scheme is quite as applicable to sitting tenants also. In the former Bill of three years ago there was a section applying to

Chairman—continued.

yeomen farmers, that is, the sitting tenants, farmers of more than 50 acres, to which the Bill is now limited.

579. As I understand, your principal object is to secure a profit on the speculation to the local authority?—Yes.

580. But do you attach any considerable importance to the other point you have mentioned, namely, that you would give the municipal authority power to enforce the conditions just as a landlord is able to enforce conditions?—There is only one other condition I think in the Bill other than the enforcement of this quit-rent (besides the conditions which I mentioned before as sub-letting and sub-dividing), and that is that the land shall be cultivated.

581. The conditions, as I understand, are that there shall not be sub-letting, and that the owner should also be the cultivator?—Yes.

582. Do you attach importance to the powers that will vest in the Local Authority under your plan to enforce those conditions?—I attach great importance to both, and specially to the one as to sub-letting, for the reason which I have stated.

583. If the tenant be the owner out-and-out, do you think it would be more difficult to enforce these conditions than if the local authority remained permanently the owner of a certain portion of the ground?—I think it would be impossible to carry out any such condition after all the money was paid and the man became absolute owner; I do not see how it is possible in that case to impose any condition as to sub-letting; and if we are to have landowners, I prefer to have large and wealthy ones rather than small and impecunious ones. Besides, I do not see why the taxpayer or the ratepayer should be called upon to any large extent (without having anything in return or any safeguard) to provide the money to enable men to become absolute owners without imposing any conditions, and with the possibility that these owners might let their land instead of cultivating it.

584. You know, do you not, that there is an agitation at the present time for the enfranchisement of leaseholds?—Yes.

585. And your scheme would establish permanent leaseholds which could not be enfranchised?—Yes; but it would not have the objection that I have to private leaseholds. I have no objection to leaseholds being in the hands of the community in its corporate capacity, as this would be.

586. You object to private landlordism, but not to municipal landlordism?—Yes, because when land under lease falls into the hands of the community the same objection does not arise as when it falls into the hands of private leaseholders.

587. But under your scheme it never would fall into the hands of the community?—No, but they would be continually getting interest on three-fourths of the amount of the purchase-money which will be a perpetual charge of which the community will have the benefit for all time.

588. But it is a fixed charge?—Yes.

589. You do not provide, do you, for the community getting the unearned increment?—Yes; the

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Chairman—continued.

the Bill provides that everything in the way of improvement to the land which is the result of a man's enterprise and labour and skill shall be absolutely his; but if by some accident, such as the land being wanted for a cemetery or a railway station, or something totally outside the man's own efforts, there should be a great rise in the value of the land, then without injury to the man, and after giving him fair compensation, the community shall repossess itself of that land.

590. But that is not the ordinary case of unearned increment: let me put this case, supposing the land is in a district which is at the time of purchase agricultural, and the agricultural district becomes a mining district, and a large population springs up; then the land becomes more valuable for other purposes, and goes up in price; who is to have the advantage of that increased value under your plan?—The land dealt with in my scheme can never become more valuable to the holder except for agricultural purposes, because he is not allowed to use it or to sell it for anything else. It must always be in the possession of a cultivating owner.

591. In the case I put (which is a very common one all over England) would your proposal be that the land should be compulsorily kept for agricultural purposes when the interests of the population demanded that it should be used for building?—If the interests of the population demanded that it should be used for the purposes of building, or for any other purpose for the public good, there are provisions by which the community, as represented by the local authority, could retake the land under certain conditions fair to the holders for such public purposes.

592. Then it is part of your scheme that for any purpose for the public advantage, which may be afterwards defined, the local authority should have power to re-purchase the land at its original price, plus the value of any improvements that the tenants may have made?—Yes, dealing liberally with the tenant over and above that.

593. According to your plan the cultivator would have all the advantages of a mortgagor without the disadvantages?—Yes.

594. There would be no law expenses, and the smallest possible rate of interest, and no liability to foreclosure?—Yes.

595. In fact, he would be in the position of a freeholder or copyholder, subject to a perpetual quit-rent?—Yes; I should prefer to call him a freeholder, subject to the payment of this annual quit-rent, which could never be raised upon him; an unimproveable rent.

596. I understand you consider that the local authority would have sufficient security for this undertaking in the 25 per cent. which the cultivator has to find and in the presumably increased value of the holding under small cultivation?—Yes.

597. Is there any system at all equivalent to the proposal being tested at present in any country?—Taking England first, there is something of the kind in Worcestershire; there is an estate of something over 200 acres on which a colony was settled about 45 years ago.

598. What is the name of the estate?—The great Dodford Estate; it is 15 or 16 miles from Birmingham, and about three or four miles from Bromsgrove. It was from that estate that I got this idea of tenure. At that time this estate was cut up into four-acre lots, with a building, a cottage farm on each lot; the owner offered the lots to any suitable persons, provided that they would pay a portion of the purchase-money; the portion was not fixed, and it was allowed to be moderately small. The remainder of the purchase-money the owner agreed to allow to remain on perpetual mortgage, if I may so term it, he having no power to call it in, but it was to remain for ever at 4 per cent. as far as his power was concerned. There are some occupiers on this estate whose circumstances I know, who have not paid off the mortgage to this day, and they do not intend to pay it off; but they are practically freeholders.

599. They cannot pay it off, can they?—The occupier can pay it off in the case I refer to; but the owner (who ceases to call himself an owner, but is only the quit-rent receiver) has no power to call it in. In this particular case the occupiers have the power to pay it off; but seeing that it is at 4 per cent., which is a low rate of interest, and that they regard themselves, and are regarded by everyone else as freeholders, and can do as they like with the land, subject to this charge, there are some to this day who have not paid it off; others, however, have done so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

600. Are you aware that in Scotland a system, corresponding to the one you have just described prevails, under the name of the feu system, almost universally?—Yes, but the feu system is an arrangement between the landlord and the tenant.

601. Does not that correspond to the system you have described in Worcestershire?—I know of the feu system, but what I want is that the local authority and the ratepayers should be the people who reap the advantage.

Chairman.

602. Is there any system similar to this which you propose in existence in any other country?—There is nothing exactly like it, but there is a system in Holland, which is almost universal in the Province of Groningen, which is called the "Beklemregt"; it is a system of perpetual lease or tenure, to a certain extent similar to the plan which I have been advocating, with this difference, that instead of the local authority, the lord of the manor is the receiver of the quit-rents. The holder is regarded by the public in Groningen, and regards himself, and is, in fact, the owner, subject to this fixed charge. The lord of the manor can never raise this quit-rent, and has no power over him in any way, except as regards one or two minor conditions, such as that the occupier is not allowed to sell the soil of the land, and so forth. The holder can sell or devise or mortgage his holding as a whole, but he can never sub-let or sub-divide it, except in a few special and exceptional cases. In the case of sale or change of tenancy of any kind (as in the case of a similar tenure in Denmark, called "Arvæfeste"), the lord of the manor imposes a fine, a sort of heriot, which is very small in the case of

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Chairman—continued.

of sale or succession on the part of a relative, but is larger in a case where the purchaser is a stranger.

603. In the case you refer to, do you know what proportion the landlord's charge bears to the value of the holding?—Yes. Mr. Jenkins in his evidence gives examples which will illustrate that. After stating that these farmers under the Groningen system (holders of Beklemmings as they are called) are better off than any other farmers in the Netherlands, he quotes as an example this one which is typical of the whole, namely, that of an owner who owns 100 acres, of which 85 acres is permanent pasture. The quit-rent is 17 *l.* 1 *s.* 8 *d.* per annum. The farm is worth at the present time (that was in 1881) 4 *l.* per acre, and a few years before it was worth 6 *l.* per acre, and would then have realised at least 8,000 *l.* His ancestor bought it under the system of Beklemregt in 1772 for 66 *l.* 13 *s.* 4 *d.*

604. Then the charge of the landlord in this case bears a very small proportion, a mere fractional proportion, to the annual value of the land?—Yes; but that is what I contend for. It bore a much larger proportion to the value of the land when it was bought in 1772; but by efforts on the part of successive owners (coupled with other causes, no doubt) the land has got to this value; and therefore the lord of the manor is prevented from doing what he would have done if he had let the land in 1772 on any other tenure; because under any other system, instead of receiving this small sum of 17 *l.* 1 *s.* 8 *d.*, he would be receiving the rack-rent on a property worth 6,000 *l.*

605. But even in 1772 when the system began, the part reserved to the landlord was not more than one-fourth; whereas, according to your plan, you propose to reserve three-fourths?—Yes; but I may say that this system is supposed by Monsieur de Laveleye to have originated mostly with religious houses, who let or sold land in this way, subject to its being cultivated. Those religious houses had no means of cultivating or building farms upon their land, and therefore they sold the land in consideration of the payment of a fixed annual sum, with "gifts," as they were termed, or fines on change of tenancy.

606. The point I am putting to you is this, that in this system in Holland to which you refer the quit-rents reserve averages from one-tenth to one-fifth of the value at the time the quit-rent was settled?—I should think it averaged much more than that.

607. If you turn to page 666 of Mr. Jenkins's Report you will find it stated there as being from one-tenth to one-fifth?—That is the proportion to the present rent-value if I remember rightly. It will be understood that I am not giving this as an exact example of the plan I propose, but only as being something like it; because the question we are considering is as to farming small holdings of land already in cultivation, and not requiring reclamation or special outlay on it.

608. What I want you to tell us is the way in which you justify that portion of your scheme which would reserve to the local authority so large a proportion of the present rack-rent without the least hope ever being left to the tenant of being able to reduce it in any way?—I do not admit that it is a large proportion. If the interest were as large or anything like as large as a purchaser would have to pay for a loan of money from a private individual, that argument might come in; but the purchaser under my scheme would never pay more than 4 per cent.

609. But 4 per cent. is more than is now being paid for land; land is being rented now as low as 1 per cent., is it not, in some cases?—That depends upon what value the per-centage is calculated upon.

610. Let me take, as an illustration, a farm worth 3,000 *l.* a year; the landlord would be satisfied to obtain upon that farm 60 *l.* to 70 *l.* a year, and that is what a tenant would pay to the landlord for that farm; now, if that farm were sold for the price of 3,000 *l.* to the local authority, the local authority would advance 2,250 *l.* to the tenant, on which it would ask 4 per cent., that is, 90 *l.* a year; the tenant would, therefore, be paying to the local authority under your system from 20 *l.* to 30 *l.* a year more than he now pays to his landlord?—You have assumed the rate of interest as 4 per cent., and I have assumed it as 4 per cent. for the purpose of my explanation; but, as a matter of fact, a local authority would borrow money at less than 3 per cent. However, even taking your statement of the figures, you are leaving out of sight the whole basis of the argument, that is, the ownership.

611. According to your scheme, the occupier will only have the absolute ownership of one-fourth of the land, and for that, in the case of a farm valued at 3,000 *l.*, he would have to find 750 *l.* in cash, and pay 90 *l.* a year for ever?—Yes.

612. The condition of the tenant of that farm under a landlord at the present moment is that he has the full advantages of the tenancy for the whole farm, and he only pays 60 *l.* or 70 *l.* a year?—Yes. I am not disputing that he would be able to hire a farm for less than under my scheme, although I question whether he could hire a small farm for less; but even supposing that he could, he has not the advantage of ownership, and that must be set off against the smaller rent.

613. Do you think that many tenants could be found who are now paying 60 *l.* a year who would pay an equivalent to double that (that is to say, 90 *l.* a year and 750 *l.* down in cash) for the advantage of such a limited ownership as you propose to give?—I do not admit your calculations; but, speaking to your principle, I say that there is no security in a form of tenancy such as you speak of; there is no security for a tenant that he shall not have the rent raised upon him; there is no inducement to him to make the farm worth more. The farm is not his own when he is a mere tenant; it is his own under the plan I suggest, and that makes the whole difference.

614. Assuming my figures for the moment, do you think that for that additional security which you have now described, you would find tenants who would pay double the amount of rent?—We do find them. If we take places like Lincolnshire, we find tenants giving exorbitant prices for the possession of land, when they could hire it at a much lower rate.

615. Is

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Chairman—continued.

615. Is not that generally land for allotments or very small holdings?—They are not very small holdings.

616. Do you know of any case of a man with a farm of 50 or 100 acres who would be willing to pay double the ordinary average rent, such as his neighbours have to pay, in order to have the security which you speak of?—As you ask me if I know an instance, I may say that a few months ago I was in conversation with a small tenant of 18 acres, I think the holding was, who was paying something like 4 *l.* an acre when the neighbouring farmer was paying something like 25 *s.* an acre, and if he could have had the opportunity of buying he would have given almost any price in order to call himself the owner.

Mr. *Cobb.*

617. Was that in Lincolnshire?—No, that was in Devonshire.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

618. Was it near a town?—No, near a village. The calculations which have been put to me, however, leave out of consideration the fact that my proposal is to buy a larger amount of land, say 300 or 400 or 500 acres, and divide it up into small holdings, which invariably pay a much higher rent than large holdings.

Chairman.

619. Now I will ask you to look at my calculations, which I am just putting on paper, and tell me where you differ from them; let us assume the value of the land to be 3,000 *l.*?—As we are speaking of small holdings would you take a smaller sum; would you take, for instance, a farm of 12 or 14, or 15 acres of the value of 400 *l.*

620. The value of the land I will take as 400 *l.*; the present rent upon that I assume at 2½ per cent., that would be 10 *l.* a year?—I should dispute that assumption altogether.

621. The future rent according to your scheme would be 4 per cent. upon 300 *l.*, that would be 12 *l.* a year; and then there would be the payment down of 100 *l.* cash which you must assume as being worth at least 4 *l.* a year?—Yes, you may call it 16 *l.* a year; that, adopting your figures, would be 6 *l.* a year more which the man would be paying for the ownership of the farm under my scheme.

622. That is to say the man would be paying 60 per cent. more than his competitors on either side of him who were tenants of a private landlord were paying?—He would be paying 6 *l.* a year more for a farm of 15 to 16 acres, and he would be very glad to do so. I have no doubt that the advantage of ownership, the feeling that every blow he struck and every effort he made upon that farm was his own, and that he had power to leave it to his children, no matter how valuable he made the property, would be reckoned as worth far more than the difference in the money payment, and would become worth far more than that difference, because the man who has the power over the rent is master of the situation, and there is no real security to an occupier excepting ownership.

623. Then the success of your plan depends upon a tenant being willing to pay 60 per cent. more rent in order to obtain the security of an owner?—I should not like to say yes to that question. I admit the principle so far as to say that a man will be able and willing to pay, and will gladly pay, more rent, or what amounts to more rent as owner, than he would as tenant, but I dispute its being 60 per cent.

Chairman—continued.

624. I would point out to you that there has never been any such case as this before. In the case, for instance, of the tenants who became owners under the Irish Church Act, they were called upon to pay slightly more than they had previously paid for rent, but then they became absolute and entire freeholders without any further charge, after a limited period of about 50 years; the Irish tenants under Lord Ashbourne's Act are, of course, very much better off, still, because they become absolute owners in 50 years upon payment of something less than their present rents?—Yes; but I do not think that the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act is fair to the general taxpayer and ratepayer, and I do not think they would allow that system to go on to any considerable extent, whereas there is every inducement to the ratepayers to consent to the present scheme.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

625. You say, as I understand, that you agree with the principle, but you do not agree with the figures which the Right honourable Chairman has put to you; would you say which figures you take exception to?—I object to the assumption that a small farm is at present let at 2½ per cent., for instance. I have gone into these things closely for the last 30 years, and my experience is that the letting value of a small farm of 10 or 12 acres (I cannot say what its selling price would be, because, as a rule, such farms are not to be sold), as compared with land all round is far more than 2½ per cent. Taking the small holdings throughout the country, wherever there is a small holding of some five to 20 acres, you will find its rent-value to be 20 or 30 or 40 or 60 per cent. higher in proportion than similar land in the form of farms of 100 and up to 300 acres.

626. Is not that a good deal accounted for by the fact that those lands are purchased by borrowed money?—I do not know what the reason is.

Chairman.

627. Then I would ask this: if everywhere land in small farms will fetch 60 per cent. more rent than land in farms of say, 100 acres and upwards, how do you account for the fact that the landowners do not divide their farms?—I think that they are dividing them in many cases. One great reason against the sub-division is the want of money to restore buildings and other appurtenances which have been destroyed by the policy of consolidation which is now found to be a wrong one. May I be permitted to point out one flaw, as it seems to me, in your calculation, because I do not want to admit that tenants would be required to pay 60 per cent. more for a small holding than they would have to pay if the land were rented from a private landlord. Supposing that in a parish there are three small farms

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Chairman—continued.

of 20 acres each which are let for say some 3 *l.* to 5 *l.* an acre, and there is another farm of the same kind of land of 300 acres which is probably let for 20 *s.* or 25 *s.* an acre, the local authority would have a great margin in that case, because they would buy this 300-acre farm, say at 20 years' purchase at 25 *s.* per acre, and they would be readily able to let it in small farms at considerably more than the large farms would make. I am not supposing that a local authority would be stupid enough to go and buy up all the little holdings which are making 3 *l.*, 4 *l.*, 5 *l.*, 6 *l.*, and 7 *l.* an acre, and pay 20 years' purchase for them when they could buy in big farms at 20 years' purchase at 25 *s.* an acre.

628. I would only point out that that last statement of yours is an admission of what I have been putting to you; you say that tenants already pay, not merely 60 per cent. more, but in the cases which you have named, 200 and 300 per cent. more for small farms than for large?—I know that in some cases they pay quite double.

629. My question was, do you think that tenants would be willing, in order to carry out this transaction which you propose, to pay 60 per cent. more than is now being paid for similar land by their competitors, it may be in larger farms, but at all events, in the same neighbourhood and under the same conditions; and I understand your answer to be, Yes, they will, because they already do it?—I should like to put my answer in this form. They will willingly pay a much larger interest per annum, we will call it rent, because a man who buys fixes his rent for ever; and a man will be willing to pay a much larger yearly amount as owner than he will be in the form of rent as tenant. But I couple that with this contention, that under my scheme the local authority would be able to acquire large estates and turn them into small holdings, and in that way the occupiers would not be required to pay such a large extra yearly rent.

630. Is there any other illustration from foreign countries of a system similar to what you propose to which you wish to refer?—Yes. There is a tenure something like it in Denmark called the "Arvæfeste." That tenure in Denmark is always regarded as freehold. Mr. Jenkins in his report speaks of 80 per cent. of the land of Denmark as being cultivated by proprietors; but in stating that figure he includes as proprietors those men under the "Arvæfeste" tenure; they are regarded in Denmark, and regard themselves as proprietors. As a matter of fact they hold subject to a quit-rent and a fine on change of tenancy, something like that under the Beklemregt, which I have described in the Netherlands.

631. How does this tenure differ from the English copyhold?—It is more simple and more defined. English copyholds vary so much; nearly every manor is different in some way, and certainly manors in different counties differ in their customs and their demands. They had separate courts in the old days, and they imposed what conditions they liked; there is no uniformity in the service they require. Altogether, the English copyhold system is a very complex one, whereas the Arvæfeste system is quite plain; the holders simply pay the quit-rent. There is no condition as to sub-division, but that is not necessary in Denmark, because the law of the land prevents sub-division below 25 acres, 25 acres being supposed to be the smallest amount of land on which a family can live.

Chairman—continued.

632. Is there any control vested in the lord of the manor as to the sale of the land?—He has a voice in the case of a sale; he has some voice in the apportionment of the mortgage, if one may so term it, on the land, but practically it amounts to very little.

633. Have you any information as to the working of this system in Denmark?—Yes; it works as a cultivating ownership. There is no distinction drawn between that tenure and freehold. The ordinary freeholder has no annual quit-rent to pay, and the Arvæfeste holder has a separate quit-rent to pay every year; that is the only difference.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

634. That system has not been in practice many years, has it?—For a great number of years.

635. It has been enlarged very much in the last 10 years, has it not?—I do not know that it has.

Chairman.

636. Have you anything more to add with regard to the tenure in Denmark?—I might add, with regard to my statement, that the land in Denmark was not allowed to be sub-divided below 25 acres; that that only applies to a man who gets his living as a farmer, and who has no other occupation. The law of the land is that, except by special permission of the Government, a farmer of 25 acres is not allowed to sub-divide his land. But then there is another class of small cultivators called "housemen," who are peasants who farm up to 10 or 12 acres. These men are not called farmers, though they are really cultivators, but they have other occupations in connection with their holdings. Our representative at Copenhagen, Mr. Strachey, reckoned that there were 137,000 of these "housemen" engaged in various occupations, two-thirds of whom are freeholders.

637. I think that you have something you wish to say on the Report of the Royal Commission of 1882, which dealt with the erection of a peasant proprietary?—Yes, the Royal Commission of 1882 reported unfavourably to a peasant proprietary.

638. What did they say?—Their words were that they thought it "inexpedient to stimulate the artificial growth of a system" (that is, the system of a peasant proprietary) "which appears to be ill-adapted to the habits of the people, or to the condition of agriculture in this country." I have tried hard to understand what that paragraph means, or what they wish to convey by it; but when they speak of a peasant proprietary as contrary to the habits of the English people, they must be ignoring history from the beginning. If they had said that a peasant proprietary was what Monsieur de Laveldye calls it, "a lost art in England," which flourished at one time, they would be nearer the point. Neither can I gather from the evidence placed before that Royal Commission that such a sweeping statement is quite warranted.

639. Was there much evidence taken before that

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Chairman—continued.

that Commission with regard to peasant proprietary from all classes?—There was not much evidence from the peasant proprietors. There is only one witness who occurs to my mind who was a small cultivator; you may call him a peasant proprietor, that is a gentleman at Cottenham, and his evidence was all the other way.

640. You do not think that the case of the advocates of peasant proprietorship was fully represented before that Commission?—I do not think it was.

641. I think, however, that one of the Sub-Commissioners makes some recommendations upon the subject?—Yes; there were two separate special reports, the one by the honourable Member for Sleaford, which principally consisted in the statement that corn would cease to be grown in England (which seeing that the amount has increased very largely this year and last year does not seem likely to be verified), and the other by Mr. Clay, which is of a most valuable character, and has important recommendations embodied in it.

642. What are the special recommendations which Mr. Clay makes to which you wish to call attention?—Mr. Clay strongly recommended increased security and compensation to tenants for unexhausted improvements; he recommended a permanent reduction of rent as being absolutely necessary, and not merely temporary reductions, which he thought of no use. Then he also recommended that the law of entail should be abolished as being bad for the interests of the tenant, and of the landlord and of the cultivation of the land; he recommended that the law of distraint should be abolished as it raised farms above their value.

643. Do you connect those recommendations with the subject of our inquiry?—Yes; if Mr. Clay's recommendations which I have mentioned could be carried out, that would no doubt cause a spontaneous increase of small ownerships. Then Mr. Clay makes this very important statement, that lawyers and men unfitted by want of practical knowledge are employed as factors and managers of estates, which he thinks is very detrimental to the future of agriculture. His Report is full of valuable recommendations, whereas the general Report of the Commission itself is in the main a very colourless one, and has no recommendation of any importance except one, I think.

644. I think you put in some Tables of Returns on the last occasion when you gave evidence; perhaps you would give us some further statistical particulars. You have examined the Agricultural Returns, I believe?—Yes.

645. Do they throw any light upon the number of cultivating owners?—They show what a comparatively small amount of land is held by occupying owners. For instance, taking the return of 32,684,399 acres rented and occupied, or owned and occupied, the number of occupiers who rent land is 475,962; occupiers who own land 73,433; occupiers who rent and own land 20,811.

646. Does that last figure refer to persons who have some property which they own, and some which they rent?—Yes; that makes a total of 570,206 cultivators, which is the total in the

Chairman—continued.

Return. Now, if we come to the acreage, we find that there is in Great Britain (I am not speaking of Ireland now), rented and occupied 27,774,328 acres; owned and occupied, 4,910,076 acres. That makes up a total of 32,684,399 acres which are in cultivation throughout Great Britain, including fallow land.

647. That is to say that is the amount of such land for which returns were furnished, but I there is some land, is there not, of which the people who make up the returns have to estimate the quantity?—Yes, but that is only a very small quantity; it is only one and a-half million acres which the Government have to estimate out of above 32,000,000, so that the return might be taken as the actual return from the cultivators. Now, if we take Jersey and Guernsey for the purposes of comparison, there we have a total of 4,583 cultivators; of these occupiers who rent number only 1,711; of occupiers who own there are 2,102; and of occupiers who rent and own 770, making a total of 4,583. Then if you take the area under cultivation, we find there is rented and occupied 15,902 acres; owned and occupied 16,279, making a total of 32,181; that is to say, that there are more owners who occupy their land in Jersey and Guernsey than there are renters.

648. You have taken out the returns for Holland also, have you not?—Yes, the Reports of the Commission abound with evidence both in the case of Holland and of Belgium, as to the extent to which cultivating ownership exists. I have taken out an example in the case of Holland, which is not excessive as compared with other countries. I will just take two or three provinces out of the 11 provinces; if we take Friesland there are 4,758 cultivators, out of those cultivators half are proprietors and half are tenants, and they are mostly small farms. Then in South Holland there are 4,273 cultivators, 55 per cent. of whom are proprietors and 45 per cent. tenants; in North Brabant there are 15,030 cultivators of whom 79 per cent. are proprietors and 21 per cent. tenants.

649. So that in all those three provinces the proprietors form more than half the total number of cultivators?—Yes, and that speaking generally is true of the whole 11 provinces. But I might say again that in Holland as in Denmark these figures include only farmers. Besides the farmer there is the small cultivating peasant who has other occupation, and who is called in Holland a cattle peasant. In Friesland, for instance, the whole number of cultivating farmers is 4,758, and the number of cattle peasants 7,072; in South Holland there are 6,627 cattle peasants. Those cattle peasants keep pigs and goats and cows, they have a little land, and have also other occupations to fill up their time; I do not wish that very valuable class to be omitted in the consideration of the state of things in Holland.

650. Have you also taken out the number of horses kept on these farms in Holland?—I have not got those figures in the case of the Dutch farms. I can also give examples if the Committee wish it in the case of Belgium, and also in the case of France as to the character of these farms.

651. Have you any information as to the

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Chairman—continued.

amount of labour employed on these forms?—In Holland it is reckoned that there is one man to 25 acres of land; that is the national idea of the requirements of a farm, and that idea is acted up to.

652. You have said, I think, that in your opinion the rents of small holdings are higher than the rents of large holdings, and that the tenants of small holdings are willing to pay more?—Yes.

653. Do you think that that statement holds good in the case of England?—From my own experience I should say it is almost universal; I have invariably made it a practice to go into that question; and I find that it is generally the case.

654. Do you consider that the same rule obtains in foreign countries, where small holdings are numerous?—Yes. Although Mr. Jenkins was opposed to peasant proprietary, yet his remarks as to rents of small holdings in Holland and Belgium, and Denmark, are very striking; he describes them as being "very high." With regard to Friesland, for instance (as to which I have already quoted some figures), he states that the rents are simply "fabulous." Taking Greningen, for instance, which is one Province in the Netherlands, the average was 4 *l.* 2 *s.* 8 *d.* an acre in 1881; in Guelderland the average was 2 *l.* 4 *s.* per acre; in South Holland it was 2 *l.* 10 *s.* to 4 *l.* per acre, and so forth. If you take Belgium, the result is still more striking; the rents north of the Sambre especially are described as "incredibly high," and the small holdings and farms are at a higher rent and cost more than any other land. I might also give the opinion of Mr. Henley, who was one of the most painstaking of the Assistant Commissioners; he states that the cultivators in the Island of Axholme, for instance, gave very high prices for land (which is the same thing as rent); as much as 68 *l.* per acre.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

655. To what date does that statement refer?—That was the value of the land in 1867.

Chairman.

656. Then coming to the productiveness of small holdings, I understand you think it is greater in proportion to the size than that of large holdings?—Yes; personally I do not attach very much importance to single instances of what can be done by small proprietors, because it depends so much upon circumstances; it depends upon the man, and upon his family; and you can prove almost anything by taking isolated cases.

657. I think your idea is that upon these small holdings the tenant is tempted to expend an excessive amount of labour, and to make an expenditure in manuring, and in other ways, to obtain from a small piece of ground a larger proportion of yield than a farmer can get in a much larger occupation?—Yes; no idea can be formed unless you have lived among them, and with them, as I have done, of what continual care is given to the land if a man possesses it, or has an absolute

Chairman—continued.

security in it; it is not a labour to him, it is a pleasure to him so far as weeding, manuring, and cultivating it are concerned; it is perpetually in his thoughts.

658. You are dealing I think now with small leaseholders as well as small owners?—Yes, I am.

659. In that case the temptation of ownership does not arise?—I was brought up on an estate on which a man never had any fear of being turned out, provided he paid his rent.

660. His holding was almost equivalent to ownership in that case?—Yes, in that case it was. The man had no idea of ever being displaced so long as he paid his rent.

661. Is there any illustration which you wish to give upon this point?—Yes, with the qualification which I had mentioned as to the value of individual instances. I may say I was speaking a few months ago to a small owner in Wiltshire who was paying nearly double what a large farmer near was paying, and I mentioned the difference to him, and I took down his reply at the time, which was as follows: "It is true my rent is nearly double that of the large farms around, and unless I can make it up by superior yield I could not succeed;" and I have no doubt he does.

662. You can refer us to the cases of certain estates, can you not, as illustrating the point we are now upon?—Yes, there is the case of the estate brought before the Royal Commission in 1882 by Sir Thomas Acland, the case of Pentrasse Moor Estate in Cornwall. This estate was 500 acres, and to use Sir Thomas Acland's words, "Within the memory of man it was worth little or nothing for agriculture." It is now (1882) occupied by some 50 cultivating leaseholders, that is 50 families. They or their predecessors enclosed the land, brought it into cultivation, and built their houses.

663. Will you give the proportion of stock held on this land as compared with the stock in the county of Cornwall, and in the Truro Union?—In 1882 the proportion of stock for 100 acres was as follows: for horses, the proportion in all Cornwall was 5·72 per 100 acres; the Truro Union it was 5·09; and on the Pentrasse Moor Estate 6·8; for cattle, cows, and heifers, in Cornwall, the proportion was 10·00; in Truro Union the proportion was 8·89, and on the Pentrasse Moor Estate 36·36. If we take other cattle, the proportion for all Cornwall was 19·68; in the Truro Union it was 21·33, and on the Pentrasse Moor Estate 35·61. Then coming to pigs, the proportion for all Cornwall per 100 acres was 11·14; for the Truro Union 7·37, and for the Pentrasse Estate 40·9. It is right to state that with regard to sheep on the Pentrasse Estate they have none, while in other parts of the county they have a considerable number; but if you reckon the proportion of sheep to cattle, whether you put it as some put it, at five, or as others at eight, or as others at 10 sheep to one beast, you will still find the proportion of stock on this estate exceeds by a long way the average throughout the county or in the union.

664. In these small holdings the people utilize the land in every possible way, do they not?—Yes.

665. Would

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Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

665. Would it not increase the value of the comparison you have given us to state the number of sheep for the county and for the Union?—Yes. The proportion of sheep per 100 acres for all Cornwall was 77·38; in Truro Union it was 84·52, and on the Pentrasse Moor Estate there were none mentioned. Then, of course, I might add to that again that there are a large number of poultry and such like which are not returned in the figures I have quoted.

Chairman.

666. In this connection I think we come to the returns which you put in on the last occasion when you gave evidence?—Yes. If another individual typical case is wanted, I can refer to another. I put in a table last time showing the proportion of stock on small and large holdings.

667. You put in a table and explained it; do you wish to add anything to that explanation?—I would like to make this comment upon the returns that I put in. So far as I can see there is no answer to them as proving that the production of stock is much larger on small holdings than it is on large ones. If the same proportion of stock were produced on holdings of 100 acres to 300 acres as is produced on holdings of one acre to 100 acres, there should be as follows:—Horses, 725,757; whereas there are only 581,198, a balance against the larger holdings of 144,559 horses. If we take cows and other cattle there should be 3,778,034; whereas there are only 2,671,021; showing a balance in favour of the smaller holdings of 1,107,013 cows and other cattle. If we take sheep and lambs there should be 11,122,848, whereas there are only 9,498,367; showing a balance in favour of the small holdings of 1,624,481 sheep and lambs. If we take pigs there should be 1,673,662; whereas there are only 808,230; showing a balance in favour of the small holdings of 865,432 pigs.

668. According to your calculation there is an immense additional productiveness in the small holdings per acre than in the large holdings?—Yes; since I was last before the Committee I have extended that calculation, and as it has been an enormous amount of labour perhaps I might be allowed to give it; it states the result in a more simple form. I have taken the whole of the land from one acre to 100 acres, and from 100 acres up; that is to say, I have divided the land into 100 acres downwards, and 100 acres upwards, and the result is quite as striking as the results I have given, showing that on the farms of 100 acres downwards there is acre for acre a very much larger production of stock of all kinds. I can give the figures if the Committee wish. If you take 100 acres downwards there are 9,617,551 acres of land, and if you take 100 acres upwards there are 22,925,506 acres of land. Now if the larger holdings were stocked in the same proportion as the smaller, the figures for holdings of 100 acres and upwards would be thus: Horses, 1,218,381, while in fact there are only 895,214, making the balance in favour of small holdings, as regards horses, 323,167. If we take cows and other cattle there should be 6,342,459, whereas there

Chairman—continued.

are but 3,898,925, giving a balance in favour of small holdings of 2,443,534 cows and other cattle. If we take sheep and lambs there should be 18,850,073, whereas there are 18,460,262, showing a small balance in favour of small holdings of 389,811 even as regards sheep. If we take pigs the number should be 2,809,698, whereas there are but 1,191,856, showing a balance in favour of small holding of 1,617,842 pigs. That shows the result as regards stock dividing the whole cultivated land into holdings of 100 acres upwards and 100 acres downwards.

669. Do you consider that the same rule would obtain with regard to other produce?—I think with regard to other produce the balance is altogether in favour of small holdings, I mean such produce as poultry, butter, cheese, eggs, and such things, of which we have no return, but which certainly are produced in a larger proportion on smaller holdings than on the larger ones; and if that be the case it makes my contention very much stronger, as showing that the total production of the smaller holdings is very much larger than that of the larger holdings.

670. It might be said, however, that there is more corn produced in the larger holdings, might it not?—Yes, that might be said; but I put in a table on the last occasion I was before the Committee, showing the size of holdings in two corn-growing counties, Lincoln and Norfolk, and in two mixed counties, Somerset and Devon.

671. The general result of that table was to show, was it not, that small holdings were fairly distributed in corn-growing counties?—Yes. If any conclusion can be drawn from that, it is that even with regard to corn small holdings are as productive or even more productive than larger ones. I may take Norfolk, for instance, as the honourable Member representing one of the divisions of that county is here. These figures show that out of 13,991 holdings in the county there are 9,772 of between 1 and 50 acres, and 11,157 of between 1 and 100 acres; so that the argument that there is so much more corn grown on large farms than on smaller ones will not explain the difference in the tables I have been quoting.

672. Is there anything more that you wish to say about these tables?—I might emphasize a little the fact, that if we take the number of persons and families who have charge of these holdings it will be readily seen what an extraordinary amount of personal care and attention is given to small holdings. For instance, if we take farms of from 1 to 100 acres, the total acreage of which is 9,617,551, we have 433,406 persons or families managing them; whereas, if we take farms of from 100 acres and upwards, of which the acreage is no less than 22,929,506, we have only 98,937 persons or families in charge of or occupying them; so that we have presumably a much larger amount of personal attention given to the smaller farms than to the larger ones.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

673. In the last figure you gave of 98,937 persons, do you include the agricultural labourers on the farm?—No; I include simply the occupiers, the tenants and owners, in both cases.

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Chairman.

674. You have some other suggestions, I think, to make with regard to legislation; you consider, I believe, that the existing law is unfavourable to the creation and maintenance of small holdings?—Yes; I do. I have no desire to go into the question of entail and settlement, which, of course, it is contended, and I think rightly contended, are great barriers to the distribution of land; but there is one reform which is absolutely necessary for any spontaneous increase in the number of small holdings, and that is an improved system of registration and of transfer, of buying and selling the land, so that it may be made less costly and more expeditious.

675. I think that everybody admits that an improvement is desirable; have you any suggestion to make as to the form which it should take?—I received some years ago a pamphlet from Sir Robert Torrens, setting forth the system which has obtained in Australia for so many years. I have condensed the information given in that pamphlet if the Committee wish to have the information.

676. Perhaps you will state what the main features of the system are?—The principle of the system is that an estate shall pass not by the execution of any deed, but by entry in the register. Contracts are previously drawn between the parties, and authority given to the registrar to make the necessary entry in the register book. All titles previously to their being put upon the register shall be examined by efficient officers, solicitors who are appointed for the purpose. The application for registration is then published in the "Gazette" and other papers, so as to call upon anyone to show cause why the person about to be registered should not be recognised as the indefeasible owner of the estate. The indefeasibility is necessary; without it cannot cut off the retrospect, and the retrospective character of the title is the root and source of the confusion, difficulty, doubt, cost, and waste of time under the old system. The principle is central or metropolitan, as opposed to district registration, in order to avoid the enormous staff which Lord Cairns has pointed out would be necessary under a district system of conveyancing by registration of title. In the event of no adverse claim being entered, a certificate of title is made out in duplicate; one bound up in the register book, and the other given to the owner of the land. Each certificate of title has endorsed upon it by the registrar a memorandum of every dealing with the land, so that a mortgagee or transferee can see exactly how the property stands. This simple arrangement does away with the cost of abstract of title and search, and shortens the time which is necessary to complete the operation. When a transfer takes place the parties appear before the registrar or a justice of the peace to prove their identity. The owner lodges his certificate of title with the registrar and receives a fresh certificate cleared of all that has ceased to affect the title, such as a jointure, if the person is dead, mortgages that have been released, &c., &c. In case only part of the land is sold, then the fresh certificate of title for the part transferred contains particulars by the registrar; or, the owner can have a fresh certificate of title for the balance of

Chairman—continued.

land that remains to him unsold. Take the case of mortgage as an example. Instead of the difficult and expensive process adopted in England, a simple form is used as follows: "In consideration of the sum of so-and-so received from A.B., I hereby mortgage to him all my estates and interests in the land registered in Volume No." so-and-so, "folio" so-and-so, "of the register." The map in the register office sets forth all the details of the parcels of land referred to. In less than half-an-hour this can be done, the mortgagor being supplied with a certificate of title, but marked in red ink with the statement that it had been mortgaged for the sum of 10,000 *l.* (supposing that to be the amount it was mortgaged for), and the mortgagee having a certificate of mortgage certifying that the land was charged with that sum. The expense of such a transaction of mortgage as described would be 10 *s.* There is no necessity to employ a solicitor. If secrecy is desired, the parties can require that no one can look at the title of the land without their written permission. Without this requirement of secrecy an index is kept by which anyone can examine the title upon payment of half-a-crown. There is an assurance charge of a halfpenny in the pound made upon all land upon first placing it upon the register, but not after, for the purpose of assuring against loss, errors, or fraud. But there have been (that was up to a few years ago) above half-a-million different dealings and scarcely a single case of loss by fraud or any other way has occurred, so that the insurance fund has gone on increasing until now it is very large. Should it be that an error or omission is found, such a case would have to go before a judge of the Supreme Court for an amendment to be allowed. In no case is the land restored, but a money value or compensation for the error or omission is allowed. Out of the whole number of cases there have been only one or two errors committed, amounting to less than 1,000 *l.*, which was paid out of the insurance fund referred to. There is a Statute of Limitations, about seven years.

677. How long has that system been at work? The system had been at work up to 1883, the date at which I received that pamphlet, for 22 years in South Australia; about 20 years in Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania; 10 years in New Zealand; and five or six years in British Columbia

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

678. Does it obtain in Victoria?—I do not find any reference to Victoria.

Chairman.

679. Do you think that this system would be applicable to this country?—Sir Robert Torrens states that it could be put in force much more easily in England on account of the parish bounds and hedgerows, and landmarks which would mark the boundaries and which do not exist in these new countries where it is in force.

680. In your previous evidence you told us a good deal as to the effect of inclosures in doing away with small occupying owners and tenants?—Yes, I gave evidence to show that inclosures were one of the main causes by which the small cultivators

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Chairman—continued.

cultivators had been extinguished and practically put out of existence; but at the same time the inclosures were encouraged by the Legislature up to a very recent time, and I wish to be understood as admitting that from the point of view of the public good in the improvement of agriculture and in securing an increased yield of food, those inclosures have been of enormous advantage, and have been the cause of improved agriculture in every direction.

681. Your contention is that, with all these advantages, there was a corresponding evil which in the first instance was ignored?—Yes; in which one class suffered, and their representatives and descendants continue to suffer to the present time.

682. I think you have told us that the effect has been to cut off the supply of cultivating owners, or persons capable of becoming cultivating owners?—Yes.

683. Since 1845, when the General Inclosure Act was passed, there has been a good deal of "regulation" in dealing with fresh inclosures, has there not?—Yes.

684. But I think, in your opinion, the Commissioners have taken rather a narrow view of their powers in this respect?—Yes; in certain cases where they have "regulated" common land, and not inclosed it, they have taken a narrow view as to the class which had rights of common on the land. I may quote, as an instance, Ashdown Forest, which has recently been regulated, where the Land Commissioners, who are the Inclosure Commissioners, have decided that only "commoners" and "certain tenants of the lord of the manor," have rights over the forest, whereas a large number of cottage farmers and men who, by prescription, suppose they have a right, and who have had rights for many years, it appears are legally shut out by the scheme of the Land Commissioners from any participation in the rights of the common. I believe they have arranged the matter in this case by giving those cottagers and others certain licenses to continue to enjoy what they have enjoyed for so many years.

685. Speaking generally, your view is that the General Inclosure Acts are not sufficient to protect the small holders?—I am decidedly of that opinion, and I believe that no general Inclosure Act can protect the public.

686. Have you any suggestion to make for the protection of these small holders and owners?—Yes; I would suggest that the local authorities in each county should be empowered to acquire all waste lands and common lands in which commoners have rights; that it should no longer be permitted for any lord of a manor to acquire those commoners' rights by purchase, consent, or in any other way, on the ground that the commoners' rights belong to his successors as well as to himself; and that the manorial rights should be acquired by the local authority in each county, and that the lord should be dealt with either by a money payment or by putting aside a portion of his manor, according to the value of the rights which he now possesses.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

687. Would you include lands where the Crown is the lord of the manor?—No; I am speaking of a private owner, an ordinary lord of the manor. Instead of being allowed to buy out a commoner, or to get him out by consent, I would suggest that a commoner should be no longer allowed to sell his rights or dispose of them except to the local authority.

Chairman.

688. You would make the local authority the only person who was competent to purchase those rights?—Yes; then the sale might be permissive, but if the lord of the manor found that he could deal with no one else, the chances are he would deal with the local authority.

689. Supposing the local authority obtains these lands, would you restrict them as to the use which they could make of them?—The local authority should in that case use them for the creation of small holdings, and they should not sell them out and out, but should sell them on the principle which I have described under my Bill. I have no doubt that those small farms would be readily taken up without any risk to the local authority, especially if there were rights of common belonging to them.

690. I understand that you would give them permissive powers to do this?—Yes, you could not very well give them compulsory powers. I should have no objection, personally, to compulsory powers being given, but I am looking to what is practicable.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

691. In the case of local authorities selling some portion of this land that they acquire to small holders, will the small holders in your view be justified in re-selling the land themselves?—Certainly, to cultivating owners; they should not be allowed to sell to any but cultivating owners.

Chairman.

692. Do you think that there would be any large quantity of waste lands applicable in this way?—There are common lands and waste lands. In the Report of 1797 on Waste Lands, and again in the Report of the Emigration Commission of 1827, and in the evidence given by the Tithe Commissioners of that day (I think Mr. Jones and Mr. Blain) before the Committee of 1844, it is shown that there were in their opinion wastes capable of improvement to the extent of about 4,000,000 acres in England and Wales; and that is confirmed by evidence given on subsequent Commissions. Of course that amount would be somewhat modified, but not greatly, at the present day.

693. Have you any further recommendation to make with regard to inclosures?—Yes, the pretext for inclosures has always been to increase the food supply, and to get the land into cultivation generally; and I think it is the duty of Parliament to see that the inclosures which have been made have been put to that purpose. I think it will be found that a very large amount of land has been inclosed under that pretext, but not put to that purpose, and if it is found that such is the case, then I think that Parliament

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Chairman—continued.

has a right to insist upon its cultivation, or that power may be given to local authorities to take that land at a valuation, as it is in the condition in which it stands.

694. Do you consider that it would pay the local authority to reclaim these waste lands?—I have no doubt that it would. We have not sufficient information about the waste lands, and I would strongly recommend, as a most important step to be taken, that there should be, by a Special Commission, or by the Land Commissioners, a general survey made of all these lands throughout the country, so that we might have a knowledge as to the quantity, quality, and situation of such land, and a report as to whether it could be put into cultivation or should be retained for the public use in some other way.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

695. When you speak of waste lands, to what sort of waste lands are you now referring?—I am using the technical term "wastes" as applied to manors; I do not mean waste land in the sense of useless land, but I mean the land of the manor outside what I may call the homestead of the lord of the manor. A manor used to be divided into the lord's demesne and the waste, that is the part outlying the demesne of the lord, which was mainly occupied by commoners, much of it being occupied on the old open field system.

696. In what counties do you find waste lands of that description?—Unfortunately we do not know that exactly. What we should like to find out exactly is how much there is left of that waste land.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

697. I do not quite understand what land you are speaking of; is it land in cultivation or land out of cultivation?—I mean all lands in which there are common rights, land which might be possibly brought under cultivation. For instance, not to speak of small portions, there are above 63,000 acres in the New Forest, and if an inquiry was made we might get a report that some portion of that might with advantage, and without interfering with the Forest, be put into cultivation.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

698. Would that be chiefly mountain land?—No, I am speaking of land generally out of cultivation. Taking the Forest of Dean, for instance, there are 22,000 acres, of which a certain portion might, with advantage, be cultivated; and then if we take Dartmoor there are 100 square miles of country there where there have been portions inclosed affording good livings to small holders, and where a considerable amount more might be inclosed; and to what extent there are smaller portions of such land throughout the country we need a report or survey to tell us.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

699. As I understand, you are speaking only of land where common rights still exist, and where they have not been extinguished?—I would include all lands that are not under cultivation.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

700. Would you include hills?—Yes; I mentioned Dartmoor as an example.

701. Would you include down land?—Yes. The subject is so much in the dark, and we are so much in want of information as to the situation of such land, and the extent of it in different localities, and as to the nature of the land, whether it is common land or waste land, or whether it is cultivable or not, that we want a Commission to survey the country (and it would not be a difficult thing to do), and to give us a report on the whole question.

702. Do you mean a report as to the probability of its paying to reclaim the land, for instance, or merely as to the existence of such land?—Such a Commission, I take it, would report as to whether the lands were cultivable or not, and report generally upon the whole subject, about which we are now somewhat in the dark.

Sir *George Campbell.*

703. Do I understand that you want to inclose and cultivate these lands?—I should propose that suitable portions of such land should be acquired by the local authority, and divided into small holdings for the purposes which we are now considering.

Chairman.

704. I think your view is that these small holdings should be provided first, by the local authority, who would have powers under your Bill to buy any land for that object; and, secondly, by giving to this same local authority additional permissive powers for the purchase of the manorial rights where the lands at present subject to those rights would be suitable for the creation of small holdings?—Yes. I may take as an instance the Forest of Exmoor, where the late Mr. Knight reclaimed and cultivated many thousands of acres, and, according to the Report of the Royal Commission, that is one of the spots in which agricultural depression did not exist. Mr. Knight had farms there of all sizes, and although the ground is very elevated, being some hundreds of feet above the level of the sea, yet the lands have been successfully farmed. Probably it might be found that there is a good deal of land on Exmoor Forest and other places that would be suitable, or might be made suitable, by planting, and so forth, for the purpose of small holdings.

705. Your idea is that provision should be made in the two ways which I have described: first, by the ordinary powers of purchasing ordinary lands; and, secondly, by special powers of purchasing lands subject to manorial rights where the land was suitable for small holdings; now, is there any other source of supply from which you think that small holdings should be obtained?—Yes, I think there is in the case of land which is held more or less under the control of the Charity Commissioners. It seems to be the policy of the Charity Commissioners to allow and even to encourage the trustees in various parts of the country to sell their lands. I find that according to the 35th Report of the Charity Commissioners, "a total number of 7,072 orders has

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Chairman—continued.

has been made since 1853 for authorising" sales of real property, "and the total amount of the purchase money realised by sales effected under this authority is 6,394,251 *l.*;" and the Commissioners have sold real property during the last ten years (that is from 1878 to 1887 inclusive) amounting in value to 2,345,662 *l.* Now I think that this policy of alienating land which is more or less under public control and turning it into private ownership, as this process has done, is as bad a policy as can be.

706. What recommendation would you make with regard to these lands which are at present unsold?—I would recommend that the trustees should be permitted to sell no lands held in trust for the people for various purposes, except to the local authorities, and that they should be encouraged (as indeed they have been under the Act of 1887 partly), to sell those lands to the local authorities.

707. You would make the local authorities in effect the sole purchasers of these lands, as in the case of the manorial rights to which you have already referred?—Yes.

708. Now has there not been some legislation which does restrict the power of sale of the Charity Commissioners with regard to allotments?—The Allotments Act of 1887 (which is very valuable as a recognition of sound policy) allows trustees of charity land to sell those lands, if I remember rightly, to the local authorities for the purpose of allotments.

709. That is a purely permissive provision on both sides, is it not?—Yes.

710. But does not that Act compel trustees under certain circumstances to let their lands for allotments?—The Act of 1882 is compulsory for that purpose as regards all lands except those for educational apprenticeship or ecclesiastical purposes.

711. Therefore it does to some extent afford a precedent for what you are now suggesting, that is to say, Parliament in that case has already, so far as it could, decided that certain lands, namely, lands held for doles should be made applicable for the purpose of providing allotments?—Yes.

712. Now you go a step further and suggest that lands held for other charitable purposes should be made applicable for small holdings?—Yes.

713. And you propose to secure that by requiring the Charity Commissioners to authorise sales only to local authorities?—Yes.

714. Then I assume if a local authority bought such land you would require them to use the land for the purpose of small holdings?—That is so. I may say that there is a great deal of feeling in the localities where the Charity Commissioners have sold their land against such action on the part of men who have regarded their lands as charity lands, and who, when they see their lands sold, although they may get the proceeds of the sale, feel it to be a bad policy. I have a letter from a solicitor in Devonshire, who takes a great interest in this question of small holdings, and he states, "All our charity lands in this parish are sold. The proceeds are in the funds at Three Per Cent." (this was some months ago). "Could not power be given to re-

Chairman—continued.

purchase with the money lands for this purpose"; that is, for the purpose of small holdings.

715. I think you have something to tell the Committee about Crown lands as a source from which a supply of land might be found for small holdings?—I should like to apply the same principle that I have been advocating, to the Crown lands. There are 70,000 acres of agricultural land held by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests; and according to the last Report, that of 1888, there are between 2,000 and 3,000 acres in hand unlet. I think those lands should be offered to the local authorities, and that special facilities should be afforded for the local authorities to acquire those lands at a valuation, especially those that are unlet, or as they become unlet, or as the leases fall in; and that, if necessary, compulsory powers should be given to local authorities to purchase such lands when required.

716. The process would be exactly the same as in the other cases to which you have referred?—Yes.

717. Have you considered the question of glebe lands?—The glebe lands are more important still, in respect that they are very suitable for the purpose we are considering, owing to the fact that they are evenly distributed throughout the country, and in small quantities; they vary from 5 acres to 100 acres; a very large proportion of them are under the value of 50 *l.* per annum, and the great majority under 100 *l.* per annum.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

718. In fact, they are small holdings?—But they are held by small tenants; whereas my contention is for small cultivation ownerships. I would give the right to the present tenant to purchase his holding upon the terms I have been naming, my object being to turn occupation into cultivating ownership, that being so much better in my view; it does not follow that the present tenant should be turned out, but that he should have the right of purchase upon the terms I have named through the medium of the local authority.

Chairman.

719. What is the area of those glebe lands?—The total area is 659,548 acres, and the gross rental is 908,281 *l.* per annum, but they are so very evenly distributed throughout the country that they would, more than any other form of public lands, be suitable for the purpose of small holdings.

720. The Land Commissioners have power, have they not, to sell those lands now?—Yes, under Section 8 of the Glebe Lands Act they have power to sell, and I have seen it asserted that they can sell for the purpose of small holdings; but on reading the clause it seems to me that the power is strictly limited "for the purpose of the Allotments Act of 1887." The words are, "For the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of land by cottagers, labourers, and others, it shall be the duty of the Land Commissioners in giving their approval of a sale under this Act, either to require as a condition thereof that the land or some part thereof shall be offered for sale in small parcels, or to the sanitary authority of a

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Chairman—continued.

sanitary district for the purpose of the Allotments Act, 1887, or to satisfy themselves that such offer is not practicable without diminishing the price which can be obtained for the glebe land on a sale." My reading of that is that it is narrowed to the purposes of the Allotments Act of 1887, but I would recommend that it be extended to small holdings, but the sale confined to the local authority, the principle being to prevent any more of those lands going into the hands of private owners.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

721. Is not there a danger of interfering with the provision of allotments by doubling the call upon those lands? This being land under the Act of 1887, which it is suggested should be used for allotments, and you also suggesting that it should be used for small holdings, is not there a danger of interfering with the labourer's allotments?—No, because the amount required for allotments is so small comparatively, that there would be no difficulty in supplying the wants for allotments from that and other sources.

Chairman.

722. Now I think that you have already told us that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are selling land for the purpose of creating cultivating ownerships?—Yes.

723. But I understand that someone will come here to represent the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, therefore we shall have from him more directly the terms upon which that transaction is going on; but if there are any general observations that you wish to make upon that matter, the Committee will be happy to hear them?—I will leave that to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; there is no doubt that a large proportion of their sales have been what might be called small holdings.

724. I think they have sold out and out to particular individuals?—Yes.

725. And you object on principle to the alienation of public lands?—Yes; I have a very strong opinion on that point, that any further alienation of lands, whether by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, or by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, or the Charity Commissioners, should be stopped.

726. But you would desire that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should be enabled to sell to local authorities, for the purpose of creating small holdings, on the principles which you have stated?—Yes.

727. Are their lands suitable?—Yes; their lands are in most counties, and there are also in many counties lands belonging to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and others, and it would be very much for the public good, and those institutions would not be injured, if facilities were created for handing over those lands to the local authorities for the purpose we are considering; the expenses of management, generally costly, and frequently inefficient, would be saved, and personal attention would be given to the management of every acre of land, which cannot be given now by agents and solicitors, who often live a long way away from the land, so that they

Chairman—continued.

cannot give that attention to the cultivation of the land which it requires. I might quote from the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Culley, who says, speaking of this class of landowners: "If the labourers on the estate of a life-renter are, as far as their cottages are concerned, in a bad way, the labourers on the estates of collegiate and ecclesiastical bodies, and all corporate bodies whose members manage and divide the income of the estate, are in a much worse; the life-renter has a conscience, but a corporate landowner has none, and the system of beneficial leases, to which some of them still cling, is simply an abomination." Mr. Clare Sewell Read, in his essay on farming in Oxfordshire, says: "It is computed that nearly one sixth of the income of the land of this county (Oxford), *i.e.*, rent and tithes, belongs to the Oxford Colleges and other religious bodies, and, speaking generally, is badly managed."

728. Is there any other means to which you would call attention for the purpose of obtaining land for small holdings?—There is one other; that is the tithe land. It would be a question for consideration, and one I think that would be an advantage, if landowners, and especially life-owners, might be allowed to redeem their tithes by surrendering a portion of land equal to the capital value of the tithes to be redeemed. That would put more land forward for the purposes we are considering; that land could be purchased by the local authorities, and the opportunity would be taken advantage of, in my opinion, by many landowners who have perhaps not the money to spare, but who would surrender land willingly in place of the money for the redemption of the tithes.

729. I do not know whether I have omitted anything upon which you wish to give evidence?—I think not.

Sir *George Campbell.*

730. I think you said that you divided the small holdings into two kinds: one where they were only small farms, and the other where they were somewhat smaller holdings cultivated by people who follow other trades or professions. What I want to ask you is this, in order to clear the ground, do you really think that in the present conditions of agriculture, the facilities of communication and the cheapness of corn, a tradesman or man having another profession can cultivate with advantage a little farm as distinguished from a garden or allotment with grass for a cow or common for a goose, or things of that kind; that he can really cultivate a farm with advantage?—Yes, I think so. I know a case in Worcestershire, where a man and his son rent a quarry, which occupies part of their time, and who have 10 acres of land at the present time, and are doing very well by it. When I last saw the son I said, "Suppose this land were your own, what would you do with it?" His reply was, "We should do a good many things that we do not do now;" meaning thereby how much better they should do with it. They were paying 4 *l.* an acre for that 10 acres of land, and they were very well content with it, because it filled up their time as quarrymen.

731. That

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

731. That was the case of a man who had a quarry; I can quite understand that in exceptional cases a man of that kind might cultivate land with advantage, but what I want to ask you is whether you think there is any large class of tradesmen, or people having other professions, who would cultivate land of that kind with advantage?—I think a very large class; in every village you will find a man who would be very glad to have such land; in a village in Wiltshire I know a man, a grocer, who has seven or eight acres of land; such men are mostly busy only one or two days in the week, market days, and a bit of land of this sort is an advantage to them.

732. Are not there a good many people who in the present time of depression of land and produce would be glad to give land up rather than take it?—I do not understand what is meant by depression of produce and of land. In my young days we used to sell a fowl for 1 *s.* 1 *d.*, and butter for about 8 *d.* a lb., in fact, nearly everything of this kind was less in price than now.

733. How do you propose that a man should cultivate such a piece of ground; by spade labour?—It would entirely depend upon the circumstances of the man and his family.

734. But do you think if you go beyond mere gardening, that a man can cultivate agricultural produce properly by spade labour?—Certainly; I think that spade labour is very much more valuable than any other form of cultivation; so far, of course, as it is possible.

735. What produce would a man raise by spade labour?—Almost anything. I know a man who has got four acres of land and he invariably lays down a quarter of an acre of it in wheat, on the ground that he likes to grow it and eat it; but I would leave that entirely to the small holders.

736. But I want to know, supposing a man has six, eight, or 10 acres, what would he grow?—A man with eight or 10 acres would grow a variety of things; he would grow vegetables.

737. But that would be garden cultivation; I want something that is not garden cultivation?—He would keep pigs and poultry; I would leave it entirely to him what he would grow.

738. But as a rule would you contemplate his cultivating produce of this kind by spade labour or by horse labour?—By spade labour, unless it were more than the size you speak of, three or four acres; it would depend upon the size.

739. At what kind of size would you suggest that those holdings might be profitably portioned off?—I would leave it entirely to the holders to decide this question as to how they should cultivate it, and in what manner; so much depends upon circumstances. I have known small holders who would borrow a farmer's team where they were on good terms; others keep their own; others have horses in connection with other occupations; you cannot lay down any hard-and-fast rule as to the cultivation of small holdings.

740. It is very likely that a small holder may have other trades at which he may labour, but is it not very difficult for a man whose main profession is some other trade to cultivate the land so as to get enough out of it to compete with persons whose whole attention is given to the land?—I think not. Lord Tollemache, for example, has 50 holdings of nine acres each, and a number of a less size; he makes it a condition that these small holdings shall be held by men in some other occupations, such as hucksters, tradesmen, &c.

741. Are not those grass holdings for cows?—Yes.

742. Apart from that, do you think that a man can profitably cultivate a few acres of land as a farm as distinguished from a garden?—Certainly.

743. Then, as regards the case of a small cultivator owning the land, as distinguished from renting it, I understand your view to be that the difficulties of finding capital in order to purchase land are so great that you think it necessary to get out of that difficulty in some way, and that your plan is to get out of it by empowering some one to advance to him the greater part of the capital value, and making him permanent holder somewhat upon the footing of a feuar in Scotland?—That is not my view, exactly. Even if a man had just enough to purchase his holding out and out, I do not think it would be of advantage that he should do so. We want to keep as much capital upon the land as possible. If a man had 500 *l*, and could buy a holding for 400 *l*., I would rather that he should keep as much capital and put as much stock upon the farm as possible, and that he should not be induced to exhaust the capital with the purchase, in the first instance; but my view is that it is for the benefit of this large class, the most provident labourers, and others who have skill but no money, and who are real farmers, that they should be enabled to get a closer connection with the land. I have just received a letter from an intimate friend of mine, a successful farmer, who is very much interested in this question, whose letter just answers your question. He says: "In many parishes you will find a man or two, labourers or tradesmen, who by some happy accident have become occupiers of a bit of land, from one to 10 acres. In the same parishes you will find a few other men who have the energy and ability to rise in the same way, if they had opportunity; and a large number who, do what you will for them, will never try to. All the latter want is a good garden to their cottages, or small allotment ground, if gardens cannot be had; but the former, the thrifty and industrious, are the men we want to help. These men always double the produce of the land when they can get access to it."

744. Then, as regards the small cultivators who are not prepared to find a portion of the money or to buy the land, is it not the case that the great difficulty which the landowners have in providing small holdings is in finding the buildings?—Yes, no doubt.

745. Do you think that the law of compensation for improvements could be altered so as to get over that difficulty?—There is no doubt that the present law of compensation is not sufficient. If there were such a law as exists in Belgium, where the outgoing tenant has an absolute right to recoup himself for any unexhausted improvements, that would be an improvement, but I hold that

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

that there is nothing that can give compensation and security of tenure that ownership will give.

746. Has your attention been drawn to this; that in the existing Improvement Act, with the exception of market gardens, there is no compensation to be given for planting fruit trees?—Yes, but that difficulty has been met. I think that in the Act of Sir Edward Birkbeck that class of men have compensation awarded to them; their compensation is secured by an inexpensive method; true, it is unscientific, but it is very effective and very easy. I have recently had a case in Warwickshire, in which a cottager has got 25 *s.* as compensation upon leaving his cottage garden, under Sir Edward Birkbeck's Act.

747. Is that so under the present law, that a man with an ordinary garden can get compensation for the fruit trees which he has planted?—Yes, under the Cottagers' Compensation Act, 1887.

748. Then do I understand you to say that you propose to allow these men to sell their lands, but not to mortgage them?—They might mortgage them to the extent that they can, but seeing that there is already a charge of three-fourths upon them, the power of mortgaging, you will see, is extremely small.

749. Putting aside this plan for enabling the municipalities to advance three-fourths of the purchase-money, are you generally inclined to allow sale and to prohibit mortgage?—I am inclined to prohibit private mortgage.

750. Everywhere?—Yes; I am speaking of private mortgage, not of loans for the improvement of the land by the State.

751. But as regards making provision for compensation for improvements, may it not often happen that a man may become owner by means of a mortgage, and may pay rent by way of interest, and so have the advantages of permanency of tenure while he is not obliged to advance the capital; that is to say, mortgaging a large part of his holding and paying rent in the shape of mortgage interest?—Yes, that is frequently done, but it involves a high rate of interest generally, and frequently leads to difficulties ultimately.

752. But if you have sufficient arrangements for land transfer, does that mortgaging of the land imply a very high rate of interest?—I thought you put the case of a small man who wanted to buy a small holding with the money which he borrowed and gave a mortgage as security. As a rule the only rate at which he can borrow is a high rate.

753. Is that so. Upon good landed security what would the rate of interest be likely to be?—I would prefer that he should acquire the land by a loan from the local authority at the lowest possible rate.

754. But is that rate that you have indicated, namely, 4 per cent., really a low rate?—As compared with anything he could borrow upon from private lenders it would be.

755. Cannot a man borrow at present at anything less than 4 per cent.?—I took it at 4 per cent. for the purpose of my argument, but I think a local authority could borrow it at from 2¾ to 3 per cent., under which circumstances they would charge the borrower from 3¾ to 4 per cent.; but under the plan I am recommending a loan could never be called in; it would be a permanent charge.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

756. I think you mentioned the other day the difficulty which exists in regard to the great discrepancy between the price paid to the producer and the very much larger price paid by the consumer; do not you think it very important that much more attention should be paid to the regulation of railway rates and the provision of improved markets?—I do not think I have touched upon that point.

757. Then there is one very important question I think you will be very fully qualified to give us an opinion upon: do you think that, as municipal bodies are at present constituted in this country, they are well fitted for the management of such tasks as you would impose upon them, or do you think it would be necessary in any degree to reform their constitution?—When you are speaking of municipal bodies, do you mean the county councils, or do you mean such bodies as the Metropolitan Board of Works, for instance?

758. Boroughs and county councils, or it may be parishes?—Taking the elective bodies such as you have under the Municipal Corporations Act, and bodies to be elected under the legislation which is now going on, the Act of last Session, which I hope will be continued this Session, I have the most absolute confidence in the men who will be elected under the provisions of these Acts.

759. And in their capacity to manage business of this kind?—I recommend no management whatever after the first operations are concluded; that is to say, no undertaking of farming.

760. But I think you said that you would like to impose conditions; in regard to the maintenance of those conditions a certain amount of management would be necessary; you said that the leave of the local authority would be required to enable men to mortgage or transfer their property?—No, I beg your pardon; I think you must have misunderstood me. The only conditions imposed upon the local authorities would be to see that the land was not neglected; next, that the rent-charge was paid; and, lastly, that the land was not sub-divided or sub-let.

761. You think that the present municipal bodies are competent to manage an affair of that kind?—The municipal bodies to be elected under recent legislation are certainly qualified for the purpose.

762. I think the Right honourable Chairman pressed you as regards the position of a small holder who might under your plan have to pay higher sums in the way of interest than he would have to pay in the way of rent; did not the Right honourable Chairman's question assume that the land was now worth 40 or 50 years' purchase?—I should hope not. I think he said 30 years' purchase.

763. The last calculation of the Chairman assumed that the land was worth 40 years' purchase?—Yes, but that would not affect the argument at all; it would equally apply to purchase out and out as to the plan which I suggested.

764. But at the present time is land in England worth 40 years' purchase?—It depends upon

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

upon the land. I think the old adage remains good now, that "you cannot pay too much for good land, nor too little for bad land." Good land in England is not unlet as a rule.

765. Do I understand that you are or are not in favour of permitting enclosures?—I would have no enclosures of any kind except by the direct assent of Parliament in each case. My opinion is that the present general Enclosure Act, subject to what Parliamentary control it is under, is not sufficient for the protection of public rights.

766. I understand from one part of your evidence that you complain that enclosures had been carried a great deal too far to the detriment of the people, and from other parts of your evidence you rather advocated the enclosure of such places as the New Forest, the Forest of Dean, and other forests of that kind?—Yes, I wish it to be understood that the result of enclosures and the result of large farms had been good. That is to say, the result of enclosures especially, so far as the improvement of agriculture goes, so far as causing land to produce 28 bushels instead of 10, making sheep weigh double what they did, and upon the improvement of cattle in every way; I quite admit that that could not have been done upon the open field system; but what I complain of is that that has been done at the expense of the smaller class of peasant, and that his share in the land has been practically taken away in order to make those enclosures. If the peasant who had a right in a common had been himself allowed to have an enclosed area of, say, 10 or 20 acres in lieu of his common rights, I should not have complained then, that is to say, as the operation was carried out in Prussia.

767. In the case of a municipality taking land for the purpose of letting it out in small holdings, supposing it were proved that those small holdings were not very profitable as agricultural holdings, would you object to their being sub-divided into gardens?—The provision in the Bill is that there should be no sub-division except with the consent of the local authority.

768. But with the consent of the local authority you would have no objection to those holdings being sub-divided?—No, I would give full power to the local authority to deal with such cases.

Viscount *Curzon*.

769. You spoke of the system of small holdings which has taken place in Holland; what is the average size of those holdings?—It is difficult to say what is the average size of the holdings in Holland, they vary very much. Taking the average farms, for instance, upon the land reclaimed from the Sea of Haarlem, which is of very large extent, and might be taken as typical, there they have been cut up into holdings of from 50 to 100 acres each; that, I think, would be larger than the average in other places.

770. Therefore, I suppose, generally speaking, you would say that the average size of a farm there is under 100 acres?—It is very much under.

771. And how long has this system been going on?—May I ask, do you refer to the peculiar system of the Beklem-regt.

772. Yes?—That is more common to the northern province of Jroningen; but I quoted the size of the farms in the Netherlands in four or five provinces which might be taken as generally descriptive of the whole 11 provinces.

Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

773. Then with regard to the Danish system, which you also told us about this morning, there I think you said that under the system of Arvæfeste, there were no holdings under 25 acres?—Yes. The Government recognised 25 acres as the smallest amount of land upon which a farmer could live and maintain his family, and therefore a farmer is not allowed by law to divide it to anything below 25 acres; but the great class of peasant proprietors and men who are engaged in other occupations are allowed to have any amount of land, and they do have from one to seven or eight acres, part of them freehold and part of them on lease, and part of them on a lease of lives; but a distinct farm is from 25 acres upwards.

774. Do you think that either of those systems could be initiated with advantage to us in this country?—I think the plan I have ventured to recommend, as embodied in the Bill, is an improvement on both those systems, inasmuch as the advantages go to the community instead of to the lord of the manor, although they are something similar in their operation.

775. Now, speaking generally of the whole question of small holdings, do you think that it is in any way due to the practice of accumulating land in large farms, that the driving away of the working men from the rural districts into the towns has taken place?—I think so; that the consolidation of farms and the enclosures (which is consolidation and something else) have been the cause of the rural population leaving the land, for the simple reason that their career upon the land has been cut off from this class of men.

776. Therefore, I suppose you would consider that under some good scheme for facilitating the creation of small holdings, you would very likely attract back a good many of the poorer classes who are now living in towns, having left the land?—I think you would retain the best of those who are still upon the land, and give new life to village populations who have also other occupations, and you would certainly attract a per-centage, perhaps not a large per-centage, but some per-centage of those who are in towns back to the land. I have had numerous conversations with men of all classes who are engaged in centres of industry, especially in mining; they are not so fond of working in the mines as they would be of working upon the land, but they work at the mines because they get more money; they are there for their need and not for their convenience.

777. Do you think, taking the whole of the United Kingdom, that the system of small holdings would be beneficial?—I wish to be guarded in my reply to that question, because nearly all the improvements in our agriculture have resulted from the existence of farms held by wealthy men much interested in agriculture, and who hold them in severalty; and without that condition of things improvement in agriculture could not go on to any extent; it would be quite impossible for those holders, even though they had the benefit of scientific and other discoveries, to carry

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Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

on these improvements. I might mention the names of men living at the present day who are types in a marked manner of a class engaged in agricultural enterprise in various directions. There is Sir J. B. Lawes with his agricultural experiments; there is Lord Leicester in his general farming; there is Lord Moreton for the improvement of pigs; and the Duke of Richmond for the improvement of cattle. There was the late James Howard; there is Mr. Walter Gilbey, who has done so much for the improvement of the breed of horses; and there is Mr. Jeremiah Colman, a Member of the House, with regard to stock-breeding; there is Lord Egerton of Tatton for general and experimental farming; all these undertakings require that there should be wealthy landowners and good sized farms, and although these experiments and improvements could not be carried on by any other class, yet the benefit of them extends to the smallest occupiers; so that I am far from wishing to have one uniform system of small holders by any means; what I mean is that there should be a supplementary system of small holders, the conditions for which are much more favourable in my opinion as regards the land, and the quality of the persons to be benefited, in this country than in any country in Europe.

778. Do you think that there is any wish at all amongst men generally to own land?—I am sure there is except with those with whom the wish has died out into hopelessness. If you were to give real fair facilities you would find a class of men who would become saving and thrifty in order to avail themselves of those advantages. There is no reason now why a rural labourer should be thrifty that I know of; there is no reason that touches his imagination; you might tell him that thrift is good in the abstract, and being a steady man he might be thrifty, but there is nothing that would touch his imagination like the prospect placed before a young labourer of 19 or 20 of acquiring land if he can save a few pounds by the time he is 25; but to tell him he must be thrifty because otherwise he will not make any provision for himself in old age is not to excite his interest at all; it is too long away off from him.

779. Is it not the fact that landowners generally throughout the United Kingdom are rather disposed to sell their land and thereby to give the facilities for the creation of small holdings?—In the first place there is very little land to be sold except under Lord Cairns' Act. If it be true that anything like eight-tenths of the land is tied up (and I think myself that estimate is excessive) there is very little to be put into the market except under Lord Cairns' Act.

780. Still, Lord Cairns' Act allows a landowner to sell any land he likes, as far as I understand it, only he may not apply the money obtained from the sale of the land to his own use; it must be invested or go to improve the property?—Lord Cairns' Act offers none of the ordinary inducements to a landowner to sell. A landowner, like everybody else, is sometimes in want of money, and if he wanted, say, 1,000 *l.* and could get it by the sale of land, he would sell it; but now if he sells he sells to get 30 *l.* a year for life, a thing which he does not care about. And again, the practice is somewhat humiliating; he has to make his affairs to a certain extent known; he has to carry out his operations under certain restrictions, and so on; whereas if he were to sell out and out if he wanted 1,000 *l.* and could receive 1,000 *l.* for the purpose he wanted it for, you would then find that Lord Cairns' Act would operate; but its operation up to the present has been very small.

Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

781. Therefore I may conclude that so far as your experience goes something is necessary in the way of legislation to help in the direction of the creation of small holdings?—I think so. It has taken generations to destroy a peasantry, and the effect of anything we may resolve upon must be gradual in the restoration of it, but it is high time to begin.

782. Of course you recognise the difficulties as to fencing and buildings which have been erected under the present system, and under the old system particularly, but which would become very difficult questions when the small holdings are created?—Fencing and buildings are very difficult questions in the eyes of landowners; they are not a difficult question in the eyes of the peasant. Upon the estate I was born on, when a new building was wanted, the surveyor was called in, and the thing was done in the most admirable manner, but the cost of them could never be recouped. Upon the small holding we had we built pigstyes, barns, and stables, nothing like so good in quality and appearance, but absolutely as good for use, and it is impossible to say that over and above some small sums for material they cost anything; and if you will only trust the peasantry, or trust these people who will lay out their money upon the small holdings and leave the difficulty with them, they will apply an amount of leisure and industry to the work which is not to be comprehended by the landowners who are in the habit of providing their buildings by giving the order to a builder and surveyor. At the same time, there is a provision in the Bill for loans to be made for buildings which have to be paid back absolutely in 35 years. That question of building is a very serious one for the landowner who wishes to divide his estate; it is not a serious one for the small holder when he once puts his foot upon his small holding.

783. Do you think there is a general tendency now for landowners to reduce the size of their farms?—I have heard of such cases. I recollect a case in the West of England where a man had to take 50 acres of land and attach it to his farm, and the old homestead was turned into a sort of barn, and the question afterwards was whether that building should not be furbished up and the land thrown into two holdings; but I am afraid the present landowners have not too much money to spare for those things.

Mr. *Hulley Stewart.*

784. Have you formed any estimate of the extent to which there is likely to be any demand for small holdings?—No, and that forms the suitableness of the scheme I am advocating, because it is a self-acting scheme, and the demand would adjust itself to the supply; but you can only gather the extent to which the desire for small

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Mr. *Hedley Stewart*—continued.

small holdings exists by perpetual inquiry, and by the fact that when there is a small holding to be let, even under hard circumstances, in almost any district it is taken up readily.

785. Do you propose to assign any limits whatever to the municipal or other authority in its power to acquire land?—I would not, but it has been suggested that in the Bill there should be a limit of so many millions placed, so as to allay the fears of those who think the local authorities will go recklessly to work. I have no fear of that myself, but as the process would under any circumstances be a slow one I would have no objection to so far regard it in the light of a large experiment by imposing a limit.

786. Have you considered what would be the result to the ratepaying portion of the community of the acquisition of so large an interest as three-fourths of the whole of the property in a community which is held in small farms?—It would either go ultimately to the lowering of the rates or giving the local authority a larger sum to deal with in dealing with the wants of the locality.

787. Do you agree with the view, that it might finally produce an income which would enable all rates to be abandoned?—If it were successful and largely carried out it seems to me that would be the ultimate tendency of it, but I would not say that it would do away with rates, that is too much to say; but it would go in aid of the rates, and at any rate it would destroy the fear that exists that the ratepayers would be losers by the operation.

788. The Right honourable Chairman addressed some remarks to you with regard to unearned increment. I could not gather from what you said that you had followed the unearned increment; do you consider that it would belong to the tenant, as I would call him, the owner, as you would call him, or to the local authority?—I cannot consent to call him a tenant, because he has none of the features of a tenant, he has all the features of absolute ownership.

789. Is it not giving a man tenant-right?—Yes, but in Denmark and Holland, and elsewhere abroad, a similar man is called a freeholder.

790. Then the Right honourable Chairman indicated that land in mining districts has a constant tendency to grow in value, and that in the interim before that land would be required for any public purpose, it would have grown in value very largely, and the tenant would in the meantime have an enhanced value in his holding, which he would be able to sell?—He could never sell, except for cultivating purposes, therefore the only advantage he would get would be by the proximity of a large population.

791. Then under your scheme all unearned increment would go, not to the municipality or local authority, but to the freeholder?—I do not know that that would be so.

792. Unearned increment is that which does not come from the industry of the holder; take the case which the Right honourable Chairman put, of mining industry springing up in contiguity to an agricultural district; the value of the land increases which the original holder acquired at a moderate rate under the local authority. The value of the land, owing to the mining industry springing up, has enormously advanced, and the occupying owner will be able to sell out and leave through that difference in value; that is to say, the unearned increment would go into his pocket!—Certainly, as cultivating land, yes. Any unearned increment from its value as building land, or for any other purpose except that of cultivation, he would not be allowed to have, but any unearned increment which arises from a mine springing up, or a population coming there, I do not see that you could deprive him of.

793. Then taking the increased value arising from the proximity of the town, you would not seek to give that to the municipality?—If the land were bought originally contiguous to the town, the price would be higher. If the town sprang up afterwards, there would be no means of giving any advantage to the municipality on that account.

794. Do you think that that would be right, that the municipality should not in any sense share in the advantage of the increased value which they create?—But they do share in this respect, that the owner is year by year working out the redemption, by his own industry, of the debt from the local authority to the State.

795. But I thought you considered that the difference between the larger percentage which the holder would pay and the percentage which would be paid by the municipality, the local authority would take as its share for profit. Are you anxious to secure to the local authority the unearned increment, and not to give it to the man who is the owner for the moment?—That is a very difficult thing; there is a great deal of what I may almost call nonsense talked about land as a thing belonging to the State; you must bear in mind that land is to a very large extent a manufactured article. There is the land itself; but there are also the work and labour which have been put upon it to make it of its present value; and if you are not careful you will interfere with, and confiscate some of, this manufacture, some of this value of the land to the municipality. I do not want to do that.

796. But do you object to the municipality having that value which is entirely due to the spread of population or the growth of manufacturing industry in the neighbourhood of the holding?—No; but I find it difficult to draw a hard-and-fast line. I think it is quite clear that land sold for an agricultural holding should not be sold for a cemetery, or for a railway station, or for public buildings; but how to draw the line upon the approach of population, I do not know. We had in Warwickshire some time ago public works extending over three or four years, creating a demand for produce of the land, but they have ceased now, creating a corresponding depression or cessation of demand.

797. Taking the country through there is no doubt whatever that the land which is adjacent to towns is always increasing in value, and that the urban population is constantly infringing upon the rural districts; you are proposing a national scheme; it ought to be, if acceptable, adopted on a very large scale, and the land which

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

would be acquired ought to be of a great extent of acreage, and it would certainly be that upon an average a large proportion of that land would grow in value simply by the pressure of the urban population; what I want to ask you is whether, if this land grew in value, you would object to the local authority having that benefit, say by periodical assessment?—I have this objection to periodical assessment, that it puts a damper on, at any rate it does not encourage, the industry of the holder. The man who brings his farm up into the very highest position has this fear of assessment before him, whereas the man who is careless, especially when you approach the period when the assessment is to be made, is likely to run his farm out. I think I cannot do better than give you an answer from a fact within my own cognizance. This is the position of a farmer, a friend of mine, in the west of England, whose concerns I know. That gentleman (with his father before him) has been the freeholder of a farm of 107 acres of land. Fifty years ago, as shown by his books, the ratal value (and here comes in your assessment) was 45 *l.* The land is naturally poor and hilly, and my friend says (and I think he is correct) that if it were let at a rack-rent for seven years or lese no tenant would give 10 *s.* an acre for it. He holds 107 acres; he has upon the land 50 bullocks, horses, a fair stock of sheep, and so on. Now this farm which 50 years ago was valued at 45 *l.*, was, eight years ago, assessed and valued at 160 *l.* per annum, a rise of 115 *l.* in 40 years, and he could easily let it for more

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

if he wished; but if you come to his neighbours, upon three sides of him he is bounded by tenant farmers, and their assessment is as nearly as possible what it was 25 years ago. Now, that is my answer to your question, that if this man, or any farmer, were subject to a periodical assessment for rental value it would be likely to act as a sort of check to the putting forth of his full efforts to improve the farm.

798. But you are taking the assessment, are you not, upon the value of his work?—Yes.

799. I referred to assessment upon the value which is distinctly not traceable to the farmer's own work?—I am not disposed to oppose the principle you put forward. Of course the difficulty cannot arise in any cases which exist. For instance, if a farm is sold in already close approximation to a town, the price would be reckoned accordingly, it could only come in when the population rose in the future after a man has bought his farm at the agricultural rent.

800. I put it in this way: do you consider that it is ownership distinctly that gives the impetus to labour, or the guaranteed usage or occupation of the land?—I understand what you mean, it is the sentiment of ownership.

801. You believe that it is the sentiment of ownership, not the power to use the land in perpetuity, which is the great inducement to improve the land?—Yes; the power to hold in perpetuity is a great thing, but the sentiment of ownership is a greater thing. Arthur Young was never more correct than when he described the value of the sentiment of ownership.

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Friday, 3rd May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrence.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS, a Member of the Committee, further Examined.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

802. REFERRING to your evidence as to the large amount of stock kept on small holdings, your experience, I understand, is that that is not confined to any one part or any one county in England, but it is the case generally that in small holdings a very large amount of stock is kept?—Yes. The tables I give comprise the whole of the cultivated land of Great Britain.

803. And I think it is your opinion that on small holdings it is the rule that there is high farming, that there is a large amount of stock kept, and a large amount of manure applied to the land?—Yes; I should rather call it intensive farming. There is extreme attention as to labour and personal care bestowed on the holding, and there is an extra amount of manure placed on the land as compared with that which is placed on large holdings.

804. With regard to the question of the tenants finding farm implements, carts, and horses, and so on, is it not the practice in a great many counties that they borrow ploughs, or harrows, or horses to do the work; if, for instance, on quite a small holding a man has not the necessary implements he borrows them from his neighbours, does he not?—Yes, if the holding is so small that the tenant is not able to keep a team or to keep a plough of his own he has, as a rule, no difficulty in getting a neighbouring farmer to plough for him at so much per acre.

805. You were asked by Sir George Campbell, at Question 740, as to Lord Tollemache's holdings, and it was suggested that they were all pasture buildings; is it not the fact that there are a great many purely arable holdings on his property in Suffolk?—On his property at Helmingham it is so; he has a good deal of arable land let out there, but I think it is more in the nature of allotments than small holdings; I am not sure about it, however.

806. It is your opinion, is it not, that there is an increasing demand for small holdings, especially in the vicinity of market towns and large

Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

villages?—Yes, which demand would be shown if by legislation there were facilities offered to the peasantry and others to get small holdings.

807. And that demand arises principally from small tradesmen, and also saving men who have a little money, such as farm bailiffs and others who have worked their way up, and have been able to lay by enough capital to take these small holdings?—Yes, I should not confine it to that class particularly. A per-centage of the labouring population would also be able and willing to avail themselves of those advantages if the advantages were offered.

808. Have you heard of vacant farms during the last few years, during the agricultural depression, being sub-divided into small holdings in consequence of their not being able to be let as large farms?—I have not known of such cases personally, but I have read in the papers of such things being done.

809. And among the many communications that, no doubt, have been made to you from various quarters, has your attention been drawn to the extraordinary development of market gardens?—Yes, especially in the neighbourhood of London and in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and even so far off as the Vale of Evesham. I was over the Vale of Evesham some few years ago, and it is marvellous to observe the rents they pay there and the produce they get. They used to pay as high as 10 *l.* or 15 *l.* an acre for market gardens, but the produce was extraordinary.

810. There has been in a number of cases a great difficulty in obtaining the necessary land for the development of market gardens, has there not?—I think so; it is my opinion that in such a town as Birmingham the poorer classes pay twice the price they ought to pay for vegetables for their table.

811. And if we had the good fortune to have reasonable railway rates, probably the system of market gardens would be very much extended;

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

is that your opinion?—That is a question I have not particularly gone into, but there is no doubt that if small proprietors were more common that would lead to the co-operation necessary to secure improved transit, whereas now you find one market gardener here and another there, and they have to fight the carriers single-handed, which they find it very difficult to do.

812. Bearing upon that special question as regards the market gardens and the smaller description of boldings, one great difficulty has been removed, has it not, in consequence of compensation being now easily obtained under the Act of 1887, the Cottage Gardens and Allotments Compensation Act?—Yes,. under your Act, which, if you will allow me to say so, I consider one of the most valuable for the small holders that has ever been passed; a cottager or a peasant can now get compensation for unexhausted manure and unexhausted labour, and other things, and he can obtain compensation not by the expensive methods of the Agricultural Holdings Act, but in a manner which is, as I have stated, unscientific but very simple, and which involves little or no expense. I have had several cases come under my notice where it has acted extremely well.

813. In answer to Question 746, you mentioned that in one case 1 *l.* 5 *s.* had been received as compensation under that Act; in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, I think it was?—That was in Worcestershire.

814. Are you aware that a case has been carried through in which the labourer obtained compensation to the amount of 5 *l.* 18 *s.* 10 *d.* for his crops and the outbuildings which he had erected in the vicinity of Attleborough, in Norfolk?—No; I have heard of several cases, but I have not heard of one in which the compensation obtained has been so high. I am extremely glad to hear that it is so; it shows that the Act is very efficient for the purpose for which it was passed.

815. At Question 701 Mr. Chaplin put a question to you relative to down lands. I presume you would not propose to start small holdings on down lands where there were no villages or houses near; taking, for instance, the top of Brighton Downs you would not suggest cutting Brighton Downs up into small holdings where there were no villages or houses near?—No. With respect to downs and commons I would confine myself to the suggestion I have already made, but I would like to urge upon the Committee that there should be a general survey of all those lands, and a report fully explaining their situation, and their character, and the necessity or otherwise of keeping them for ever open for the public, showing any parts of them that might be suitable for cultivation, and giving every information with respect to the waste lands and commons of England and Wales. That information we have not before us now; the nearest approach to it is in the Report of the Emigration Committee of 1827, and the Report of the Select Committee on Inclosures in 1843; but the information there is very imperfect, and if we could get a complete report, which would not be a costly affair, it would be of immense importance in view of legislation such as we are contemplating.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

816. In the Bill which you introduced last Session I think there was a compulsory clause for the acquisition of land up to 40 acres?—Yes, I propose in the Bill before Parliament this Session to leave out the compulsory clause. I think that the compulsory clause would not be needed, and I fear that it would never be put into operation, for it is one thing to have a compulsory clause to secure a few acres of land for allotment, and it is another thing to have a compulsory clause to acquire a large tract of land for small holdings. Besides that, another reason for leaving out the compulsory clause is that we have now representative county bodies who are more or less subject to the wish of the electors, and, therefore, it might be presumed that they would take the necessary steps if at the election time the desire of the electors was shown that the Act should be put in motion. Should it appear after a permissive Act had been in force some time that compulsory powers were necessary, it would be far more easy to obtain them in addition to an Act already passed, than to pass an Act with large compulsory powers in it.

817. By the withdrawal of that compulsory clause probably a great amount of opposition would be removed?—I found a considerable amount of opposition to the compulsory clause on both sides of the House; the economic school, on whichever side they may be, are opposed to compulsory acquisition. I myself have no objection to the clause, and I think it would be an improvement to the Bill if it were in; but it would be difficult to pass, and it would probably be inoperative when passed.

818. Is it the case that there is an increased disposition to grant small holdings on the part of the landlords?—I am not aware that there is; I have seen a report of that in the papers, but in travelling through rural districts I have not noticed any practical result of a feeling of that sort.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

819. In one of your replies the other day you said that you would rather see large and rich landowners than small landowners who are very poor; I suppose you would make some qualification to that answer of yours?—What I was referring to was the question of sub-letting; I stated that my Bill carefully guarded against the power of sub-letting, because I considered it would not be right to enable a man to purchase a holding by aid of public funds, and then, as soon as he got it, to sub-let that holding and become the landlord. I said that if we are to have landlords at all I would rather have large and wealthy ones than a new class of landlords which would have been created really by the State and became landlords through the power given them of sub-letting the land. In other words, I would prevent sub-letting; that was the meaning of my remarks.

820. The remarks were prompted, I suppose, by your desire to show your anxiety to safeguard these holders against the temptations and difficulties of mortgages and the creation of debt on the credit of land?—No; it was rather to meet the

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

case of a man who purchased a small holding by the aid of the local authority, and who might be tempted, if good times should come about, to let the land at a higher rent; it is that which I would prevent. I want to keep a continuous cultivating ownership, with no power of subletting or sub-division.

821. I understand that the proposal that you are now making is that the small holder should only own one-fourth in value of his holding?—The proposal is that as soon as the purchase is completed he shall be absolute owner of his holding subject to a payment of a per-centage, say 4 per cent., which is the rate I gave, on three-fourths of the value of his holding, he having paid a fourth of the purchase money at the time of the purchase.

822. Do you not think it would be better to let him hold perfectly free, at least half the value, instead of one-fourth, of the land, and for the corporation (that is the county authority or whatever they are) to take rent upon half the value?—That is a question of degree; that does not affect the principle at all. I should have no objection to consider that.

823. Would you think that that would give the tenant a greater sense of ownership, and thus create a greater energy and industry on his part in working?—I do not think it would at all, because he could not possibly have a greater sense of ownership than he would have under my proposal. If you have a man with a freehold of 1,000 *l.* worth of land, and 600 *l.* or 700 *l.* mortgage upon it, he never loses the sense of being the owner himself.

824. You think that his industry would be sufficiently excited by his sense of holding in perpetuity?—Yes, he is absolutely secure; he has power to devise the land, to sell the land and to do everything but sublet it, or subdivide it.

825. With reference to the comparative returns of stock on small and large holdings, do you think that it would be a valuable addition to the returns to obtain one in regard to poultry?—It would no doubt be a valuable return to get, but it would involve an enormous trouble on the Department I should think. All such statistics, if they are accurate, are extremely valuable.

826. Would it be a very great effort for the farmer, when giving his number of horses, to say that he has 200 fowls and 100 geese?—No, if you could adopt in the return for poultry the same plan as is adopted in the present statistics of excluding all holdings below one acre, you would probably get the return with comparatively little trouble. In the return for pigs, the cottagers' pigs, and all pigs kept on holdings below one acre are excluded.

827. In your opinion, if you exclude land of less than one acre, would that not really exclude that part of the community who have the largest number of poultry in proportion to their land, namely, people with a quarter of an acre of garden?—There is no doubt that these smaller men keep a larger number of poultry in proportion to the larger holders.

828. With regard to sheep, did your returns show that the number of sheep suffered in proportion on the small holdings in comparison to large holdings?—The balance, even in the case of sheep, was in favour of the smaller farms.

829. But not of the very small ones, was it?—Yes. Taking holdings from 100 downward to one acre, or 100 upwards (the figures are in print in the Tables before the Committee), and you will see that taking the figures in the various ways I have drawn them out, the balance is in favour of small farms in all classes of stock, although, as might be expected, the balance in favour is not so large with regard to sheep.

830. There were some questions asked as to whether you thought that the class of people who would take advantage of any scheme of small holdings would not prefer to rent land which is let at 2 per cent. interest for the profit of the landowner, to purchasing these holdings and paying 4 per cent. for the loan?—I dispute the assertion that land is let in small holdings at 2 per cent. profit on the part of the landowner.

831. Is it your opinion that many small holdings (I am now referring more especially to very small holdings of two or three or four acres) are more probably let at 10 per cent. than 2 per cent.?—If you come down to so small a quantity as two acres, three acres, and one acre, I have no doubt that 10 per cent. would be nearer than 2 per cent.; that is for small allotments.

832. With regard to the working out of these questions on the ordinary principles of business, do you think that those principles will apply dogmatically, and certainly to the success or otherwise of small holdings?—I scarcely understand the question.

833. In the ordinary way of commerce you would say that you buy an article at so much per ton, and you could sell it at so much advance upon the price given for it; in the case of these small holdings do you think you can reckon what can be done and what cannot be done in the way of profit and loss on the same strict principles?—If you refer to the loss on the part of the community I think the danger of a loss is reduced to a minimum. If you refer to the loss or gain on the part of the small purchaser, the cultivating owner, I think there is every promise that he will make his holding pay satisfactorily.

834. I will put my question in another way; do you think that the industry and the devotion to his personal interests on the part of a small holder, where he has the assurance of continuance, would be calculated to upset the ordinary methods of calculation in the values of letting or purchasing land?—I have no doubt the returns of the cultivating owner, that is the profit, would be far greater than those of an occupying tenant on the same area of land; in other words, that the extra cultivation, the extra produce which cultivating ownership gives would cause the total produce to be much larger than on the same area of land by an occupying tenant.

835. The success of it could not be calculated upon the same basis as the success of an ordinary tenant who is liable to six months' notice?—I do not think there is any comparison. The basis of the whole contention is that cultivating ownership is more successful than tenancy.

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

836. So that calculations based upon the present system as between a large landowner and his farmers, who are liable to a short notice to quit their holdings, would not apply in your opinion to freehold holdings where the men are really working on their own land?—I should think they would not apply. I should compare the two by saying that the one is a lodger and the other is the permanent occupier of his own house.

837. Under your proposed scheme, do you suggest that the holders should have absolute freedom of cropping?—They would be absolute owners for all purposes except that of sub-letting or sub-dividing. It would be a freehold, I might call it, subject to a quit rent of the character which I have named.

838. The holder might either sell his straw, for instance, or keep it for his own purposes, or do anything he liked?—He might do anything he chooses with it.

839. And he would also have full freedom in the matter of the erection of buildings so long as they would be used for agricultural purposes, that is, for the purposes of the land?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

840. In reference to the question that was submitted to you just now, as to farmers being liable to receive short notice, and that being a hindrance to them to farm, as compared with peasant proprietors, is it not your experience that at the present time it is the landlord rather than the tenant who is liable to short notice?—Yes, but the amount of uncertainty in both cases is bad for agriculture. My meaning in giving that answer was that you cannot expect a man to do the best with his land unless he has absolute security for all his improvements; and there can be no security given equal to that of ownership.

841. But you do not, I suppose, go so far as to say this, that the possibility of receiving a short notice in the present day is a cause of depressed or depreciated agriculture?—I think it is one of the causes of the comparative unproductiveness of many farms which leads to the depression in agriculture.

842. Do you really mean to say that at the present moment tenants of large farms are constantly under fear of receiving short notice to quit?—No, I do not say that.

843. You will probably agree with me that the fear is rather on the part of the landlord that he may receive such a notice?—It is the tenant's turn, perhaps, now.

844. I gather as the general conclusion from your evidence that in your opinion there has been a large diminution of small holdings or small holders in recent years, amounting almost to the extinction of the class of small cultivators, and that that result has been brought about by legislation?—That is my contention.

845. And that this diminution you regret as being highly injurious both from a social and an economic point of view?—Yes.

846. I apprehend there is probably little difference of opinion with regard to that point from the social point of view, and for my part I entirely agree with you, from that point of view, but I have some doubt on the economic aspect of the case, and it is to that part of your evidence

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

that I want to direct your attention; you divided the small holdings of which you spoke into two classes?—Yes.

847. Namely, holdings which were, so to speak, self-contained, and holdings which were to be considered as adjuncts to the business of people with other occupations?—I said in my evidence that I considered there were two classes of small cultivators; there was the small cultivator who would cultivate the plot of land sufficiently large to maintain himself and his family, and there was another class, and not the least valuable class, who would have small holdings in connection with other occupations.

848. I did not quite understand whether in speaking of these holders you were referring to freeholds or to tenancies, or to both?—To freeholds, always.

849. You referred entirely to freeholds?—Yes, entirely to freeholds of the character I have named.

850. All your evidence is directed then to the endeavour to establish the point that you wish to recreate a number of small freeholds?—Yes.

851. Now as to the size of those holdings, can you give us any idea of what in your opinion would be the size most calculated to produce the results you desire?—For which class do you mean.

852. We will take both classes. We will take first the self-contained class?—With regard to the self contained class, it would depend upon the object for which the small holding was used. For instance, I referred to the Great Dodford Estate in Worcestershire, where there are a number of men getting a good living, as they have been doing for some years, with four acres. Others again might do with more. I would leave it entirely to the means and to the opinions of the cultivators.

853. But you have given great study and attention to this question, and I want to arrive at your own opinion with regard to it. Now, I do not understand that you would be an advocate for the creation of a great number of holdings as small as four acres?—Not for a man to attempt to live on.

854. Quite so; that is to say, for the first class that we are speaking of?—Yes.

855. With regard to the first class, what is on the average, roughly speaking, the size of holding which you think would be most likely to be advantageous?—That again depends so much upon circumstances. Supposing this Bill were passed, and the County Council of Warwickshire, for instance, should determine to take up a thousand acres of land within a reasonable distance of Birmingham, I consider there is room for many hundred families who could maintain themselves in supplying a large town like Birmingham, which is inefficiently supplied now, with produce to be raised by market gardening, potatoes and vegetables, and so forth.

856. Is it in the neighbourhood of a large town like that, that you contemplate the establishment of what has been described as self-contained holdings?—I would not restrict it in any way; I would leave it to the judgment of the local authority.

857. The

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

857. The land you are speaking of now in the neighbourhood of large towns would come more under the second class, would it not?—No, it would come under both classes. Certainly it would come under the second class as well, and would be of enormous use to a large number of tradesmen and others in towns.

858. Taking the self-contained holdings in the immediate neighbourhood of large towns, can you give us any idea what size of holding you would prefer, as being sufficient and adequate to give a decent livelihood to the occupier?—Again, I should leave that to the local authority, who would not be likely to let an area, such as you named, of four acres to a man to get his living off. I take it that they would be better judges than that. Let me take the estate of Lambourne, for instance, which I was over some years ago; there are something like 25 or 30-acre holdings. It must be remembered that Lambourne is very badly situated; there is a saying that it is "nine miles from everywhere"; but still I am told they are doing very well on that estate.

859. I quite understand that you would prefer to leave it, indeed it would be necessary to leave it to the local authority, but have you formed no opinion of your own as to what should be the size, on the average, of self-contained holdings, situated at a distance away from a large town?—I should say that holdings running from 25 acres to 50 or 60 or 70 acres would be model holdings for a man and his family to work.

860. You would put it as high as 70 acres?—Yes; I should say from 25, or perhaps 20 to 70 acres. I mentioned that the Danish Government considered 25 acres to be the lowest quantity of land on which a man and his family can gain their living, and that they do not allow the land to be subdivided below 25 acres.

861. And you would share that opinion generally?—Yes, generally, but of course so much depends upon locality and circumstances.

862. Now, with regard to the opinion that you expressed that this diminution in small holdings resulting from legislation has been injurious from an economic point of view, the first question that I want to put to you is this: I observe that, in answer to Question 88, you made this statement that, "Generally for the public good the inclosures" (which, in your opinion, have resulted in the diminution of small holdings) "have been of enormous advantage." I do not quite understand how you reconcile that statement with the opinion you have just expressed, that they have been economically injurious?—In the explanation that I then gave I said that I wanted particularly to record my opinion as to the enormous advantages that have been given to agriculture by the adoption of severalty as opposed to commonalty, and that we were under great obligations to certain wealthy proprietors for the manner in which they have improved cultivation and increased the produce of the land, and doubled the weight of stock, and so forth, and I gave certain names of men of the present day who represented those classes of cultivators, and to them agriculture is indebted. I should have added also the agricultural societies, which are mainly maintained by wealthy landowners and the larger farmers who carry on

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

the work of improving agriculture at their own cost, and whose discoveries and experiments and proceedings generally have been of enormous advantage in the direction of the improvement of agriculture; but my point is that that is no compensation to the whole class of peasantry, who have been deprived of rights and squeezed off the land in order that improvements might take place.

863. What I think you would admit would more correctly describe your view, judging from what you have just said, would be this, that, though undoubtedly, in your opinion, it has been very prejudicial to the interests of a large class, yet, economically speaking, it has not been injurious, but advantageous rather than otherwise?—I could not admit that. If you come strictly to the economical view you have for the past 90 years and more to place to the debit, that is, on the wrong side, almost all our poor rates; the pauperism for the country for the past 100 years and more has been almost the direct creation of inclosures and this consolidation of farms. If you look back to the debate and the public speeches of 60 or 70 years ago, it is openly contended that the peasantry had as a fair compensation received the advantages that the poor rates gave them.

864. This process of the diminution of small holdings has resulted, you say, in the depopulation of the agricultural districts?—Yes.

865. I understand you to say that while in many cases cottagers have received money compensation, in the majority of cases there has been none?—Yes. I attach no importance to the money compensation except as a recognition of the rights of those men. The money compensation was very small, and the evils resulting from the extinguishment of the rights of a class altogether outweighed any small money compensation that could be given.

866. Upon that statement I want to ask this question: is it not the case that up till 1848 compensation in land was always given to persons who had the right to it?—Small quantities of land were given to a certain class of commoners, but it was only very small quantities. I can give you the exact amounts if you wish.

867. You admit that it was the case that lands were given as compensation?—When a common was inclosed there were small allotments to those who had rights on the common, but they were extremely small; they were often badly situated, and, as a rule, of no use to the persons to whom they were given.

868. But the rights of those people to that extent were not extinguished?—The rights to that extent were not extinguished by law, but it was, I may say, invariably found, that on account of the distances from the cottages and the unsuitability of the bit of waste that was generally put aside for them, they had within a very short time to sell the land at a very small sum, and they did sell it. Moreover, I must remind the honourable Member that that compensation only referred to actual commoners. Where the small holder was a tenant and had common rights the landlord took this compensation, and they were a very large class.

869. Again, I want to ask this question: after

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

the passing of that Act, when the right to compensation was under 5 *l.*, could not it be paid in money, with the consent of the person entitled to it, instead of compensation in land, and as a matter of fact was not it so paid in money?—There were cases in which it was paid in money, but the Act of 1845, which I have here, is so guarded in every way with respect to the rights of the commoners that it is practically but of very little use to them; and as I stated before, I regard the extinction of the rights of a commoner (which means the extinction of the rights of his succesors, that is, the rights of a whole class), on the payment of a few pounds, as an evil to the community which ought not to have been allowed.

870. As a matter of fact it comes to this, does it not, that either in money or in land compensation to some extent was made in every case where those rights were interfered with?—I cannot admit that way of putting it, because you must bear in mind that the Act only gives the Land Commissioners the power; it says they may set aside.

871. Is it not the case that it was carried out?—In certain cases. Perhaps you will allow me to give the figures of the actual quantity inclosed as copied from the Inclosure Reports, for I think it is important to have the figures; or perhaps I may give them later.

872. In respect of what was this compensation in land awarded; was it not for the right of turning out animals on commons or wastes, as well as in respect of lands which were held in common with others?—Yes.

873. Were not many of those Acts passed for the purpose of allotting separate holdings of inclosures to persons holding lands intermixed and dispersed with others, quite as much as for the purpose of putting an end to common rights?—That was so. Formerly land was held, as no doubt the honourable Member is aware, under the open field system; over nearly the whole of England. A man might have an acre in one place and an acre half a mile off, and an acre somewhere else, and that led to an enormous waste of time; it made it impossible to improve the cultivation of the land, for in the open field system there might be 50 proprietors who, unless they could all act together, could make no improvement in cropping or weeding, or draining, or anything. I am one of the first to admit the enormous advantage of the severalty system over the open field system. Take the neighbourhood of Hitchin, for example, as given by Mr. Seebohm; people living there can remember when in 20 parishes round there the land was all on the open field system.

874. In fact that is one of the great advantages which you admit have followed from the Inclosure Acts?—Yes.

875. Is it not the fact that in certain parts of England now cottagers have the right of turning out cows on lands which have been allotted to them for that purpose in lieu of the commons which formerly existed?—I do not know a single case. Do you mean that lands have been allotted in compensation of sufficient acreage to keep cows upon?

876. Are you not aware that certain lands have been allotted (which in certain counties are know as cowgates) on which the cottagers have

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

the right and privilege of turning out their cows in lieu of commons which formerly existed?—Yes; and I can illustrate that by referring to an inclosure in the county represented by the honourable Member for Norfolk, namely, the parish of Shouldham and Garboise. I have here the figures taken from the Report of the Board of Agriculture in 1808, as regards an inclosure which took place in 1794, which exactly illustrates the point you are putting to me. The quantity of land was 820 acres, and the common fields, commons and wastes, amounted to 4,750 acres, making a total of 5,570 acres. Out of those 5,570 acres there were two lots of 82 acres and 13 acres awarded to the class of people you speak of. The Report of the Board goes on to say that what these men complain of is the deprivation of keeping live stock; they used to have cows, mares, geese, ducks, &c., "but now they have nothing." It says that these two allotments of 82 acres and 13 acres find them sufficiently in fuel, but even in that not in their former plenty. The Report goes on to say that about 40 poor people kept cows in Shouldham alone, not all with what was esteemed a right, but if they were driven the fine was small. Perhaps I should explain that it was the custom in those days for men to put cattle on the common when they had no absolute right of common, and the common herdsman had a right to drive in or impound such cattle; but in this particular case the fine is said to be very small. Then there is this, which is what I want to point out: those cottages that had rights and allotments were, after the inclosure, let merely as houses, and the allotments laid to the farms. Then if you take Garboisthorpe (which was one of the two villages where this inclosure took place), the poor before the inclosure kept about 20 cows, and after they keep none, and it is a curious thing that the Report states that the poor rates went immediately from 1 *s.* 6 *d.* to 3 *s.* 6 *d.* in the pound on the new rental, which shows what an enormous increase immediately took place in the poor rates. I may point out, with regard to the use of the word "poor," honourable Members must not suppose that it means poor people as we understand the term; nearly all the peasantry; men, for instance, rated at 8 *l.* or 10 *l.* per annum who kept a pretty good stock were called poor. Bad as it is, that is a far more favourable allotment than we have had under the Inclosure Act of 1845 in any case that I am aware of.

877. From your own knowledge you are not aware of the fact that these cowgates exist over a considerable part of the country on private land upon which the cottagers can feed their cows?—I have heard that they exist in Yorkshire. I have looked over over many Inclosure Acts, at the end of the last century more particularly, and I find that they have been provided for, and I have written to the localities in many cases with the result that I can find no trace of them now. I remember, for instance, only some months ago writing to the vicar of a parish in Wiltshire, which had a considerable quantity under an Inclosure Act laid down for pasture; but I found that nobody knew anything about it.

878. Do I understand you to say that these cowgates did exist a short time ago in Yorkshire, but do not exist now?—I have heard of their existence

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

existence in Yorkshire, but I cannot speak from personal knowledge.

879. Have you made at all wide inquiries upon this subject?—I have made inquiries to this extent, that I have examined old Inclosure Acts, where it is said that so much land has been put aside. I have inquired, and I find at the present day that they do not exist. If I were to inquire, for instance, about these 82 acres and 13 acres in Shouldham and Garboise in Norfolk, I have not much hope of finding them in the possession of the peasants.

880. You do not know that these cow-gates exist, for instance, in some parts of Lincolnshire at present?—I think it is very probable.

881. But you have not any information upon the subject?—No.

882. Even where compensation was given to people who were dispossessed and where the process was legally carried out by arrangement, by purchase, or otherwise, you still contend, I understand, that a wrong was done to the commoners?—Yes.

883. On the ground that a commoner had no right to sell because his interest was only for his life?—Yes; the commoner, I suppose, had a legal right to sell because he evidently did sell, or at any rate he got over the illegality of it if it were illegal to sell; but I maintain that he had no moral right to extinguish rights that had been handed to him, and which he was bound to hand on to his successors as a class.

884. On the ground that his interest in the land was only for his own life?—Yes; it was a life interest, an interest that belonged to him as one of the class of commoners.

885. That way of putting it would be the more correct statement, would it not; is it not the case that the rights of common were vested not in the individual in respect of his interest as an individual, rather in respect of the tenement he held as a tenant of the manor?—You may say that of every landlord or landowner, from top to bottom, and not only of the commoner.

886. It is the case, is it not, that he could not part with his interest in those rights unless he parted with his interest in that tenement at the same time?—Quite so; and up to the middle ages the landlord himself could not part with his property without the permission of the Crown, so little was it recognised as his.

887. In fact the right in the common and the right in his tenement would go together?—Yes. There were other rights besides that. For instance, in the early times which I start from in tracing the history of common lands, every man who had not an interest in land and was not on the roll of a manor in some form, was a sort of outlaw; he was a vagabond and had no abiding place. It is presumed that every man had a tenement, but at any rate every man who was a recognised member of society, as a rule, was inscribed on the manor roll in some form as having an interest in the land.

888. In answer to Question 126, to which I want to call your attention, you admit, I think, that the Inclosure Acts did provide some compensation, but that it was not large enough, and in answer to the next question you made this statement with regard to the land inclosed from 1845 to 1867, "The area inclosed from 1845 to 1867 was 484,893 acres"?—Yes, that was up to 1867.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

889. You say, "Of this amount only 2,119 acres were assigned to the labouring poor, no matter what prescriptive rights they had in the land." Where is that information taken from?—That is found in the Reports of the Inclosure Commissioners (now the Land Commissioners), from 1845 to 1867.

890. Are you acquainted with the Report of the Commissioners published in 1877?—I have read it, but I do not remember the particulars. I have got the Report for 1888 here.

891. Are you aware that the Report of 1877 shows pretty clearly that the inclosures which took place between 1845 and 1876, so far from extinguishing small holders caused "the largest and most general distribution of land into small properties that has taken place in this country in recent times"?—I remember those words very well; that is not in the Report, I think, but it is in some debate on the Report if I remember rightly. I think Sir James Caird quoted those very words in his work, "The Land Interest," published in 1880, as being a proof of the advantage of inclosures in distributing land.

892. Those words are contained in the 32nd Annual Report of the Commissioners for the year 1887; as you do not seem to be acquainted with it, and as it bears so very directly on the statement made in reply to Question 127, I should like to read it to you. The Commissioners state as follows:—"It may here be convenient to state summarily the general results of the past operation of the Commission under the the Act of 8 & 9 Vict. c. 118, for facilitating inclosure of Commons. Since the passing of that Act in 1845, during the administration of Sir Robert Peel, more than 30 years ago, nearly 600,000 acres of common and commonable lands have been dealt with. This has been divided among about 26,000 separate owners, in an average proportion of 44½ acres to each lord of the manor, 24 acres to each common-right owner, and 10 acres to each purchaser of lands sold to defray part of the expenses. In many cases the expenses were raised by rate among the persons interested, but this was optional, since such persons had the alternative of selling a portion of the land for that purpose. With that object 35,450 acres were sold, chiefly in small lots, to 3,500 purchasers." The Commissioners go on somewhat later to describe the distribution of land, and they say, "As this is the largest and most general distribution of land into small properties that has taken place in this country in recent times, it may be a matter of some interest to know the quality and occupation of the persons into whose hands these lands have passed. To discover this, the legal description, both of allottees and of purchasers of sale allotments, has been taken from inclosures in which that description is given, one in each of the following counties, viz.:—Bucks, Cumberland, Chester, Devon, Essex, Hants, Herts, Lancaster, Norfolk, Oxford, Stafford, Sussex, Worcester, and in Wales, Carnarvon and Carmarthen." That is in 15 counties in all. Then they go on to say: "Upon this basis, and so far as such an average can be accepted, the

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

proportionate numbers of the different classes of the 26,000 landowners, amongst whom the land has been divided, are as follows:—Yeomen and farmers, 4,736; shopkeepers and tradesmen, 3,456; labourers and miners, 3,168; esquires, 2,624; widows, 2,016; gentlemen, 1,984; clergymen, 1,280; artizans, 1,067; spinsters, 800; charity trustees, 704; peers, baronets and sons of peers, 576; professional men, 512; and about 3,000 others in gradually diminishing proportions, but comprising nearly every quality and calling from the Crown to the mechanic, quarryman, and domestic servant." Then they proceed to observe afterwards: "Thus in the course of one generation, an extent of land equal to that of a county has been redeemed from common and waste, and has been divided among a far larger and more varied body of landowners than that of any county in England." You were not acquainted with that Report before, I understand?—Yes; all the quotation is perfectly familiar to me as quoted in Sir James Caird's book of 1880, where it appears almost verbatim; and I have also no doubt read it in the Report; but I cannot see the object of the quotation. No quantities are given there. I have no doubt that in this amount of land inclosed, which amounted to 484,893 acres, of which 2,119 acres were set aside for the labouring classes, there were a large number of holders from among the labouring classes, but they have very little land in each case. There are enumerated over 15,000 parsons, esquires, shopkeepers, farmers, and so forth, and there are enumerated between 3,000 and 4,000 labourers and miners, but the Report does not give the respective quantities which have been awarded to each. And that is not all. Under the Act the Commissioners could sell a good portion for paying the expenses of inclosure, and a good portion very likely have been sold to those yeomen, squires, and others, mentioned in the Report, but they are lands which originally belonged in a very large degree to those people represented by the 3,168 labourers mentioned there, who it would be found, if you take the quantities, have an extremely small proportion of the whole. As a further proof of what I am stating, may I quote the Report of the Inclosure Commissioners of 1888. The Commissioners were instructed by the Commons Act of 1876 to send out forms of inquiry to the managing bodies of those field gardens and allotments that had been put aside for the labouring classes from 1845 to 1878, which comes up pretty near to this time, and they have done so, and this is their Report: "The number of forms for Report sent out was 395, to which answers were received in 352 cases." The answers are, "In 265 cases in which returns were made the allotments are let to labouring inhabitants as field-gardens. In the remaining 87 cases, where the land is not used by the labourers for field-gardens, the reasons assigned may be thus summarised: allotments unsuitable, 50, garden-ground not wanted, as sufficient gardens are already provided for labourers, or more convenient ground is in their option, 24; allotments taken possession of and dealt with by the owners of the rent-charges, in consequence of the same not having been paid, five; allotments sold under authority of Charity Commissioners, and proceeds applied for the benefit of the people, four; allotments held by occupiers who have had many years' possession without paying rent, and who now claim the freehold, three; allotment sold to a railway company, the price being applied to educational purposes under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners, one," which makes up the total of 87. Then there is another element of consideration, namely, this, that those 3,168 labourers who have had allotments under these inclosures have been required to pay rent; that is to say, they have had a very small portion of their own property assigned to them with the privilege of paying rent for it.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

893. I have been unable to obtain the amounts of the different holdings which are referred to in this Report since you gave your evidence, but what I should like to ask is this: surely this Report which I have quoted gives a very different impression from the answer which you gave to Question 127, and which I read just now, as to the distribution of land?—It does give a different impression, but the whole thing is meaningless unless you can give the amounts which were apportioned. The 3,168 labourers might have had a quarter of an acre each, or half an acre each, for which they had to pay rent, while there might be 10,000 acres distributed among the squires and others.

894. Is there any reason to suppose that the amount distributed to the labourer would be anything like so small as a quarter of an acre?—I think there is good reason to suppose such a thing. Let me give an instance in your own county. When Kirton was inclosed in the early part of this century it was found that there were 146 proprietors in 5,000 acres, two of those proprietors possessing 1,500 acres between them out of the 5,000 acres. The Act of 1845 very carefully gives those large proprietors their proportionate rights as commoners, and if they happen to be lords of the manor they get another lot as lords of the manor.

895. I understand that you have always had it in view that it is very desirable that shopkeepers and tradesmen, and other inhabitants of towns, should become occupiers of small plots of land?—Yes.

896. I presume you hold the same opinion with regard to labourers, miners, and artizans?—Yes.

897. I find taking out the figures given in the Report I have already referred to, that they comprise 5,781 people?—You will understand I am not objecting, but that, on the contrary, I am very glad if those shopkeepers and widows, and clergymen, and the other people mentioned there, have succeeded in purchasing a portion of the land. All I am contending for is that it has been done at the expense of those who formerly constituted the peasant class.

898. What I want to arrive at is this proposition, which seems to me not unreasonable if that Report is to be relied upon; would it not lead to the belief that inclosures so far from extinguishing small holdings throughout the country have been instrumental rather than otherwise in furthering your own views?—I regard every allot-

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

ment that is created as being to the good, but in the cases I have quoted an allotment is a very poor compensation, or a sum of money is a very poor compensation for the extensive common rights which these people as a class formerly had which enabled them to keep a certain amount of stock, and to live as they always did live, free of the poorhouse, in a sort of rude abundance, if I may so term it.

899. If I was able to show you that these portions of land had been divided into reasonable quantities (a point upon which neither you nor I appear to have any accurate information), you would admit that the inclosures have undoubtedly carried out your wishes to a large extent?—To the extent that the inclosure created small cultivators, it was a good thing for the small cultivator; but it would have been far better if, following the Prussian custom, we had from the first taken the commoners and given them what belonged to them, land, in accordance with their rights, and had made them the small cultivators instead of selling the land to other classes.

Chairman.

900. I understood you to say in your evidence-in-chief that although in connection with these inclosures the number of freeholders might have been increased, the number of persons who had an interest in the land was greatly diminished, for instance, there might be a whole village interested in a particular common in the way of having common rights?—Yes.

901. When the common was inclosed, there might be created 10, 20, or even 100 new freeholders, but the number of new freeholders would not be equal to the number of commoners who had previously had some sort of interest in the land?—Yes. I might illustrate what you have stated by the parish of Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire, of which no doubt the honourable Member is acquainted. The Act for inclosing the land there was passed in 1788, and there were 4,000 acres of common land inclosed; the rent of it before inclosure was 1,000 *l.* per annum; that was made up by what they call 500 rights, that is the rights attached to 500 houses, estimated worth 40 *s.* each. After the inclosure the whole of the 4,000 acres was let at from 30 *s.* to 50 *s.* an acre, and the messuages as they are called, the cottages, simply let as cottages, with no rights.

902. Have you got the number of new rights created in that case?—I have not, but there seems no doubt that the lord of the manor had the whole in that case; the rights connected with the cottages were extinguished.

903. That is to say, 500 rights in the land were extinguished; and even if there were created 100 or 200 new rights, there would still be, in your opinion, disadvantage to the class whose interest you represent?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

904. But all those 500 rights would be held in virtue of 500 different tenements, would they not?—Yes, in this case.

905. Do I understand you to say that there would be anything like that destruction of tenements?—The report does not say, but I have no doubt there were a certain amount of allotments put aside for those 500 rights; but the report distinctly states that the cottages or messuages, as they are called, were let as simple houses without the rights after this date. The rent of the whole 4,000 acres went up from 1,000 *l.* to from 30 *s.* to 50 *s.* an acre.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

906. Passing from that subject, among the other consequences of this diminution of small holdings, I understood you to say that you consider that the labourer has no longer the opportunity of rising in the social scale that he had formerly?—Quite so.

907. I do not quite understand how that can be, seeing that your own tables show that 55½ per cent. of the holdings in Great Britain are under 20 acres, is not that so?—Yes.

908. And 70 per cent. of them are under 50 acres?—Yes.

909. Is that not rather inconsistent with the statement that the labourer has no means of rising in the social scale?—No; I do not see how the agricultural labouring class in England, which, as I stated, as a class, is parallelled in no other country in Europe, is to get the first start; I do not see how they are to become farmers, except in very rare cases; or how as a class they have any hope of rising. Formerly, while they had common rights, they could put on the common one or two cows, and ultimately get it up to three or four cows, and they could gradually go on to get land, the lower rungs of the ladder were not broken away at all.

910. Am I to understand that your complaint is grounded on the insufficient number of small holdings in existence already?—No; my complaint is rather grounded on the want of facilities for the class I name to become small holders. Facilities would be offered to them if small holdings were in existence, and means furnished by which that class might avail themselves of them.

911. What you mean, as I understand it, that there are possibly a sufficient number of small holdings in existence now, but there are not the facilities in existence to enable the labourers to avail themselves of the small holdings?—I should not admit the first part of the proposition. I should say that there were not sufficient small holdings in existence on the one hand, and that the facilities you speak of were required as well.

912. You think that there ought to be a much larger percentage of small holdings?—I think so.

913. Would you say very much larger?—That would depend upon the requirements. I would give facilities, and as fast as small holdings were required by suitable people, there should be no barrier to their getting them.

914. When you say that the labourers rarely move willingly from the land, and have been driven away from it, is it not partly the case that they have been tempted away by the much higher wages to be obtained in mines and factories, and upon railways, and in towns generally?—Undoubtedly. To give an instance of that, I was at the mining village of Brotton, in the North Riding; and I happened at a meeting there to refer to the Wiltshire labourers coming into the mines; and after the meeting a man

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

came to me whom I knew by his talk to be a Wiltshire labourer, and he expressed himself as disliking his present occupation immensely. He said that both for the sake of himself and his family he would go back with the utmost willingness; but that in Wiltshire they got 9 *s.* or 10 *s.* a week, whatever it was when he left, and here they got as much probably as 19 *s.* or 20 *s.* a week, I forget the exact sum. That is the feeling of these men, so far as I have had conversation with them; they do not leave the land except for the purpose of securing more money.

915. You gave us some very interesting figures as to the decrease of the agricultural population, which I think you attributed partly to the want of a sufficient number of small holdings?—The want of a sufficient number of small holdings, and the absence of any career open for the labouring class on the land. They have ceased to see any prospect in the direction of the land, except remaining as labourers, and the workhouse to end their days in.

916. I want to ask if that contention is quite borne out by some of the facts that you gave in connection with these figures; for instance, there is the example of Cornwall, which shows the largest decrease in the population of all, namely, 9·1 per cent. I find that out of 14,114 holdings in Cornwall, 10,631 are under 50 acres, or 75 per cent.; is not that so?—Yes; I may say that I gave Cornwall, because I wished to give all the counties. I know Cornwall very well, and I know that from time to time there have been considerable emigrations to foreign countries on the part of the miners. They have been given great inducements to go, and have gone, to Australia, and I believe to South America; they have gone off in large batches; and Cornwall therefore is an exception as compared with other counties.

917. The figures, according to the agricultural returns for Cornwall, are holdings under one acre, 331; from one to five acres, both inclusive, there are 3,663 holdings; from five to 20 acres, there are 4,136 holdings; and from 20 to 50 acres, there are 2,503; those I presume would be tenancies?—I only know that they are described as "Agricultural Holdings" in the returns.

918. Then you would admit that in the case of Cornwall, at all events, where the decrease of the agricultural population has been the largest according to your figures, it is not there owing to the decrease in the number of small holdings consequent upon inclosures?—I admit that.

919. In any case you are anxious to re-create a large increase of small holdings upon a very considerable scale?—Yes.

920. Among other reasons, as I understand, you wish to do so in order to increase production?—I mentioned incidentally that the smaller farms in Great Britain, according to the returns, were more productive, so far as stock of all kinds goes, than the larger ones. I brought that forwaad as a further inducement, as an economic reason, why the process should be carried out.

921. I am referring to Question 157, where you are asked, "Then your argument is, that it would be advisable to multiply small holdings as a means of increasing the production of the country," and you assent to that?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

922. Do you contend that if this was carried out small holdings could be cultivated as profitably, and often more profitably, than the larger ones?—Yes, I contend that.

923. I think you said just now in reply to a question that was put to you, that the return to a small cultivating owner would be considerably greater than to a larger one?—That is my opinion. I quoted the evidence of a small holder in Wiltshire, whose rent was considerably higher than that of neighbouring farmers, and who said, "Unless I made my small holding produce very much more, I could not possibly pay the rent."

924. Have you ever made any calculation as to the relative outgoings and returns on small as compared with large farms?—I have often attempted that, but it is impossible to do it, for the simple reason, that while a large farmer might make the calculation of everything he uses, including labour (because he pays a money value for it), it is impossible to make calculations of what you may call the outgoings of a small farmer who, with his family, is always at work, and it is quite impossible to estimate their labour.

925. It would not be difficult, I suppose, to estimate the value of his labour according to the ordinary rate of wages?—Perhaps not, but it would be very difficult to estimate the extent of labour he and his family give to the land. A small holder will get up at five o'clock in the morning, not as a labour, but as a relaxation and pleasure, in order to work on his small holding, while he would think it very hard to go and work in that way for a farmer at 10 *s.* or 12 *s.* a week.

926. You admit that it would be simple enough to make a calculation as to the outgoings and returns on a large farm?—I should think so.

927. But you have never attempted to do it with regard to a small one?—No, I found it to be impossible to do so.

928. I understand you to say, as a matter of fact, you have found the gross return to be greater on the farm of a small holder than it is on the farm of a large one?—Yes; as I say I cannot estimate the value of his labour, for instance.

929. I am not speaking of the profits now, but of gross returns acre per acre, and those you say are greater on the small holdings?—Certainly.

930. But you have no means of comparing the profits?—No, for the reasons I state; I cannot tell what the cost of the labour of the small holder is.

931. There is one matter in regard to a system of small holdings with regard to which I have always felt a very considerable difficulty, with every desire to see it carried out, or at all events tried, and that is in regard to building; would not the cost of providing the necessary buildings for a great number of small freeholds eat up all the profits?—No; I have already spoken upon that point. Unless anyone has seen and lived among small holders he cannot realise the resources of a small holder on his own land or on land he feels sure he shall remain on; he cannot realise the cheapness with which such a man would put up buildings and supply requirements which

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

which would be quite sufficient for his purpose, perhaps not so good and substantial as a large landowner would supply, nor anything like so expensive.

932. Going into this point a little more in detail, taking a farm of 10 acres, what buildings would be required?—If it was near a village, probably none.

933. Why?—Because the holder could get accommodation in the village that would answer his purpose.

934. In that case he would have to hire the accommodation, I presume?—Yes; I know a man in a small way who lived by the roadside not far from Bromsgrove, who had six acres of land, I think, and he had an ordinary cottage on the roadside, to which he had put a wooden linhay, a little shelter for his cart and implements; he had done it all himself.

935. I quite understand that he might do it by his own labour, but in any case he would have, I presume, to buy the materials. I would like to take the case of 10 acres of land, not situated immediately adjoining to a village, and where the necessary buildings have to be provided; what buildings would be required; I suppose, first, there would be the house?—The man would require a dwelling-house if he is to live on the farm, of course.

936. What would you estimate the cost of the dwelling-house at?—It depends entirely on the situation. Taking Lambourne, for instance, if I remember rightly there was not a building upon the holdings.

937. But I am assuming a case where buildings are required; what would you estimate the cost of the house at?—I am not a particularly good judge as to the cost of buildings, but I should think that everything that was requisite for a 10 or 15 acre farm could be put up for 200 *l.* or less.

938. Then the necessary buildings for a 10 acre farm, according to that, would cost 20 *l.* an acre?—I am not setting myself up as an authority as to the cost of buildings, and I cannot say exactly what it would be.

939. But this is an exceedingly important point, and one that must be threshed out, if we are to arrive at an opinion as to the possibility of this scheme being carried out with success; I therefore supposed that you had gone into all these particulars, and would be able to give us your views upon this point?—No; I consider I have gone sufficiently far when I place the small holder of the right character on a small holding of 10 or 15, or 25 acres, as the case might be, and have made provision in the Bill that he can borrow money for any buildings he may require, paying it back in quite a different way, of course, because it would be paid back in 35 years, interest and capital as well; I would leave the rest to the man himself, who has quite resources enough to deal with what he has undertaken.

940. I quite understand that you would be anxious, as we all should be, to provide him with all the facilities for getting these necessary buildings and for getting the money in an advantageous form; but I want to get at some idea as to what outlay would be necessary in a case of this sort. Of course he must have a house, you admit that?—Under any circumstances certainly.

941. What other buildings would be necessary?—It depends entirely upon how he farmed. If I may refer to Great Dodford, each man has a cottage farm there, of an exceedingly good character; they have around the house pig-styes, outbuildings for carts, or rather a lean-to for carts; and they have another little out-house, if I remember rightly; but the buildings are very simple.

942. I suppose the man would have a cow-house?—They do not keep cows on that estate, because there are no fences, and it would not do.

943. I am not speaking of that particular locality, but generally?—They would want a cow-house, no doubt.

944. And I suppose that keeping a cow, or two or three cows, would be one of the chief advantages of the system?—Yes.

945. And I suppose that this man would want a stable?—Yes.

946. You have enumerated also pig-stye, cart-shed, and his own dwelling-house?—Yes.

947. And you think, speaking roughly, that all that building might be done for 200 *l.*?—I should think for considerably less. I can speak practically as to the stable, pig-stye, and cart-shed, and I could not put a price on what they were all three built for; certainly it would be nothing in hired labour and little in material.

948. Now we will take the house; it would have to be somewhat better than an ordinary labourer's cottage, I suppose?—That depends a great deal upon the cottage.

949. At any rate, it would have to be quite as good?—The cottage farm I referred to, with the outhouses, were valued at 160 *l.*, and were very comfortable dwellings suitable for any man who might farm 30 or 40 acres.

950. You think it would take as much as 160 *l.* to build his house?—Yes, very likely, for the whole thing complete.

951. And then some 50 *l.* or more for the other buildings?—No, I think not; speaking of 10 acres of land, I should think that a small holder would put up all his requirements for 150 *l.*, there or thereabouts; I would not like to commit myself to any figure.

952. Are you aware of what the cost of the cheapest labourers' cottages is in these days?—I know what they cost when put upon the estate by a landlord; I know they cost a large sum, and I also know that the cob building, which has been taken down, which was very comfortable in every way, probably would not cost a fifth of the money.

953. Do you think yourself that a good cottage, built as cheaply as possible, with the necessary requirements for a labourer to be decently housed in these days, can be built much under 100 *l.* under any circumstances?—I should think not.

954. If this cottage is to contain a family who are to work the 10 acres, it ought to be at least as good as an ordinary labourer's cottage, or perhaps rather better, ought it not?—Yes.

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

955. I may take it that you think that the outlay for building the house-stable, cow-house, pig-stye, and cart shed, which would be necessary, would be from 150 *l.* to 200 *l.* at least?—As I state, I do not profess to be a judge as to the cost of buildings, but in cases where buildings are at all necessary (which would be in my mind exceptional cases, as there would most likely be a village or a dwelling near), supposing the holding to be one of 10 acres, I should think a man would manage to put up his requirements for 150 *l.* there or thereabouts.

956. That is to say, the necessary outlay upon the building, estimating it as you have done, would be from 15 *l.* to 20 *l.* an acre?—Yes, on a 10-acre farm that would be the proportion. Of course, the same buildings would do for 25 acres or 30 acres probably, or with very little addition.

957. Have you any idea what the necessary outlay for the same purpose would be upon a farm of 500 acres?—No.

958. You are not aware that probably 5 *l.* an acre would be sufficient?—Perhaps it might.

959. But in spite of that greater drawback, as regards the small holdings you still think that the returns and profits would unquestionably be greater from a small farm than from a large one?—Yes, very much greater in proportion. I do not mean to say that they would grow the same things on the small holdings.

960. I am speaking now of returns in the sense of profits?—Yes, I certainly think tnat they would be much greater.

961. I think you said that machinery was used as much upon small farms now as it is upon large ones except the steam plough?—I think that we were speaking about Belgium on the occasion when I made that remark, but still the small farmers of England are getting to use machinery to a very large extent.

962. What kind of machinery?—Chaff-cutters, and such like machines. I know many farmers who farm as low as 50 acres in Devonshire will buy a hay-maker and mowing machine and are getting into using machinery more and more.

963. And threshing machines?—Threshing is done by small and great alike by machine; the flail you never see used now.

964. Would not they be able to combine with regard to those things?—With regard to threshing, they all do. A threshing machine comes into the neighbourhood and the small and the middle class and the large farmers all use it.

965. And for other machinery could they not combine?—Very likely they would.

966. Would it not be difficult when they wanted to use the same machine on the same day?—Yes, that plan exists in Belgium, and there the miller of the parish is generally the man who owns the machine, and though the difficulty you refer to naturally arises sometimes, it is not an insuperable difficulty by any means.

967. It does not give rise to any serious practical difficulty?—I think not.

968. You handed in a table as to the comparative number of stock kept upon large and small farms, and you showed us, I think, by that table, first, that there was more stock generally kept upon small holdings of from one to 50 acres than on holdings of from 50 to 100 acres?—Yes.

969. Secondly, you showed that there was more stock on holdings of from one to 100 acres than on holdings of from 100 to 300 acres and upwards, with the exception of sheep?—I do not think that there was any exception. Taking farms of 100 acres down to one acre and 100 acres upwards, the balance in favour of the small-sized farm in sheep and lambs is 389,811; the balance is very much less in favour of the small holding as regards sheep and lambs than it is with regard to other kinds of stock.

970. In the third place, your table showed generally, did it not, that there is less stock on the larger than there is on the smaller holdings?—Yes.

971. You have taken those returns for Great Britain, I understand?—Yes.

972. For horses, cows and other cattle, and for sheep and pigs?—Yes.

973. Do you think that taken in that way this table fairly represents the relative proportion of stock on large and small cultivated holdings?—I think so. I am open to receive any criticism on the tables, but I have tried to find out wherein they are wrong; the figures are taken out from the Agricultural Returns.

974. They are taken from the Agricultural Returns of 1886, are they not?—I forget which year it is; it does not really matter which year it is, they are all about the same.

975. Will you turn to page 103 of the Agricultural Returns, and look at table 20, which shows the average number of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs per 1,000 acres of land in each class of agricultural holdings in England, Wales, Scotland and Great Britain. You will find in that Return that from one acre and not exceeding five acres the percentage of sheep kept on such a holding, for England, is 30 for every 100 (it is 299 per 1,000 according to the Returns, and I am rating it per 100 instead of per 1,000)?—Yes.

976. For Wales it is 63 in the 100; for Scotland it is 387 in the 100?—Yes.

977. Now this proportion for Scotland, of course, is enormous, and as everybody would know would be impossible; is it not accounted for by the fact that the per-centage is based in Scotland on the total acreage of cultivated holdings, whereas the sheep are really kept on sheep farms and sheep runs, the acreage of which is not included?—I think not, and I will give my reasons why I think so, if you will allow me. This table which I put in deals with 32,558,252 acres of cultivated land, that is exclusive of health and mountain pasture; it includes forest land and small fruit culture, but excludes, as I state, heath and mountain pasture.

978. Quite so, but the great majority of sheep in Scotland are kept on heath and mountain land, are they not?—But then they are excluded from this return.

979. This, Table 20 gives the number of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs in each class of agricultural holdings in England, Wales, Scotland and Great Britain, and your figures, I understand, are taken from the total number of horses, cattle, sheep,

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

sheep, and lambs and pigs in England, Scotland and Wales?—Yes; but if you will turn to the table to see what the term "Agricultural Holdings" includes, you will find that the agricultural holdings, for the purpose of this table, are all included in this aggregate amount of land, 32,558,252 acres, which excludes heath and mountain pasture; therefore I take it that this percentage of sheep refers to those agricultural holdings.

980. If you turn to page 38 of these Agricultural Returns you will find that while for England the total area of land and water is 32,000,000 acres, the total acreage under cultivation is 24,000,000 acres?—Yes.

981. For Wales, while the total area is 4,700,000 acres, the total acreage under cultivation is 2,800,000 acres?—Yes, in round numbers.

982. For Scotland, while the total acreage is 19,400,000, the cultivated area is only 4,800,000?—Yes.

983. You will find in addition to that, that referring to the statistics of the Highland Society (which are the only statistics I have been able to find at all upon the subject, and which have not been published since the years 1853 and 1854), there are six and a-half million acres additional which ought to be added to the acreage of Scotland, and all of which carry sheep?—Yes.

984. I do not know whether you ever saw the little pamphlet published by Major Craigie, called "The Size and Distribution of Agricultural Holdings in England and Abroad"?—Yes.

985. On page 4 of that pamphlet you will find this question of the apparent omission of many hill pastures and sheep walks, and it is said, "This feature of the Scotch, and in a less degree of the Welsh returns of holdings, also bars their use in such questions as those relating to crofters now frequently under discussion;" then this the important point to which I wish to call your attention, "Large as is the agriculturally valueless portion of North Britain, it is unfortunate that our system of agricultural statistics is far less exhaustive than that employed 30 years ago by the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland when 6,531,000 acres of sheep walk were recorded and included. Had these been as fully taken account of, we should have learned how something like 60 per cent., in place of 25 per cent. only of the surface of Scotland was employed." What I am trying to show (and I think you will agree with me in this), is that by taking these returns for the whole of Great Britain it has the effect of misrepresenting the real state of the case, certainly in England, and probably also as regards Wales and Scotland too; would it not be fairer to take the returns for England, which is certainly not open to this objection to so great an extent?—Your objection applies only to this larger division into 100 acres down to one acre, and 100 acres and upwards, and I have anticipated the objection you name (which is a very reasonable one), by dividing all the holdings in this way. I have taken holdings from 100 acres to 300, excluding all above 300, and comparing them with holdings

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

of from 1 acre up to 100 acres. I thought an objection might be raised as to these sheep-walks.

986. I think my objection holds good with all the different sized holdings. If you will allow me for a moment to take the Returns for England, dealing expressly with the number of sheep and lambs per 1,000 acres, you will perceive that the calculation in the table you have given is entirely misleading as regards sheep. On holdings of one acre, and not exceeding five acres the percentage in England is 30 for every 100; on holdings of from five acres to 20 acres, the percentage is 31 to the 100; on holdings of from 20 to 50 acres, the percentage is 44 to the 100; on holdings of from 50 to 100 acres, the percentage is 50 to the 100; on holdings of from 100 to 300 acres it is 62 to the 100; on holdings of from 300 to 500 it is 84 to the 100; and on holdings of from 500 to 1,000 acres it is 1,032 to the 1,000, or 103 to the 100; and on holdings of above 1,000 acres it is 107 to the 100?—Yes.

987. As a matter of fact it shows a steadily ascending scale, and in every case the larger the holding, larger the number of sheep, giving results, so far as sheep are concerned, which are exactly opposite to those contained in your table?—There is a margin in the excess of the number of sheep, confining ourselves to farms of 300 acres and downwards, to allow for that discrepancy; but if you take the other tables on the same page, of cows and cattle, the whole thing is different.

988. I will deal with the other items afterwards, if you please, but we will confine ourselves for the moment to sheep; I want to arrive, if I can, at an admission upon your part that taking the returns, as regards sheep, for Great Britain instead of for England, has had a misleading effect, though of course I know very unintentionally?—I cannot get away from the actual facts of the table which gives the number kept on all the different classes of holdings. Of course there would be the element of what might be kept on mountain land to come in, because that is not included in the Return, and to that extent the table would have to be rectified as regards sheep.

989. You admit it would have to be rectified as regards sheep?—It seems to me that what is kept on mountain land is not included in this Return, because it expressly states that the area does not include mountain land.

990. Quite so; that is what I wanted to arrive at; that is to say, so far as sheep are concerned, the table is misleading as to the real position between small and large holdings?—To a certain extent it would be.

991. Then with regard to horses, I admit that the number of horses as shown in your table is probably correct, but do you contend that the greater number of horses kept upon small holdings shows that small holdings are more desirable than large ones?—No, I draw no conclusion; I simply give the fact that there are more horses employed per 100 acres on the smaller farms than on the larger ones.

992. That is to say, it is a much more costly way of cultivating the land, because the horse is a costly agricultural machine?—No, I should say that the land is far better cultivated at the

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

expense of an extra number of horses, and thence comes superior production.

993. That is a matter of course of experience; is it your experience as a rule that the small holdings throughout the country are so much better cultivated than the larger ones?—That is my experience, speaking generally.

994. And do you say the same of small freeholds?—Yes, speaking generally I shall say that small holdings have more proportionate labour, both manual and horse power, and consequently the land is cleaner.

995. Have you had any opportunity of inspecting the immense number of small freeholds that exist in parts of Lincolnshire?—No.

996. You have not had any opportunity of comparing their condition and cultivation with that of the larger farms?—No, not personally.

997. Then you would probably not be surprised to learn that all the evidence given by competent experts before the Duke of Richmond's commission in 1882 absolutely agreed that the condition of small holdings in that county as regards cultivation was infinitely worse in all respects than that of large ones?—I said I was not personally acquainted with those small freeholds, but if you refer to the Commission, I am well acquainted with the evidence given before the Commission of 1882, and with the evidence, which is still more valuable, with regard to the Isle of Axholme, given before the Commission of 1867. I am well acquainted with that evidence, and I do not quite admit that it is of the decided character which you appear to hold it to be.

998. I have not got the evidence here, but if I had I think I could very easily show you that upon the plain fact as to whether the cultivation was best on the large or the small freeholds, there can be no doubt as to the opinion of the experts as expressed in the evidence that they gave?—I cannot speak to the point from personal knowledge.

999. Assuming for the sake of argument that both holdings were cultivated equally well, what have you to say upon the subject of a greater number of horses being kept upon the smaller than upon the larger holdings; do you regard it as an advantage or the reverse?—Certainly, as an advantage, because it shows, I take it, that the small holder has more horses at work. I know small holders who will use a horse to bring manure from a neigbouring large town, which is about as advantageous as anything that could be done.

1000. But if this holding is no better farmed, how can it be an advantage to him to spend so much more in costly machinery, and in farming in this way, than is spent on large farms?—I think the evidence is that the land on small farms is cultivated better from the fact that he has this extra pull over the large farmer.

1001. But we are arguing now upon the assumption that both the large and small firms were equally well cultivated, which I should hold to be a large admission on my side?—But I do not admit that assumption at all; I still hold that the small holding has more labour, more manure, and more care bestowed upon it, speaking generally, and consequently a greater production than the large one.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1002. That opinion you still maintain, although you have admitted that you have no personal experience of the county where small holdings prevail to a greater extent than anywhere else, and although that opinion is entirely opposed to that of experts who have examined into the subject?—The Isle of Axholme is about 60,000 acres, and it is mainly small holders.

1003. But the small holding are not limited by any means to the Isle of Axholme; they prevail along the East Coast, almost throughout the whole of the county?—If you go outside the Isle of Axholme, I have seen an exceedingly good report of a colony of small holders near Lincoln, I think it is.

1004. We will pass from this subject, unless you wish to add anything. I suppose you admit that the greater number of horses that are kept for cultivation, the greater the outgoings and the greater the cost of cultivating the farm?—Certainly. If you are going to confine it to the point of outgoings, the larger farms have some counterbalancing outgoings in the form of steam ploughs or steam machinery.

1005. With regard to the number of cows and cattle being greater on small farms than on large ones, can you say what proportion are cows and what proportion are beasts?—No, I cannot; the returns do not give that.

1006. They are principally cows, are they not, as a matter of fact?—I should think the large proportion.

1007. Should you not say, in fact, the very large proportion?—I have no means of knowing; the return is not divided into those heads.

1008. Have you any means of forming an opinion as to the relative quality of the stock kept in small holdings and on large ones?—No, I have no means.

1009. Have you ever formed an opinion upon that point?—No; but I have included farms up to 100 acres, and I should consider that the stock on farms of 50 to 100 acres would be as good as the stock on the larger farms at any rate, and then we know that what advantages there are in this respect (through the improvement of agriculture by landed proprietors and others) on large farms are shared by very small owners and cultivators at the present time.

1010. The census of the stock was taken, I think, on the 4th of June, was not it?—Yes, on the 4th of June 1885.

1011. Might that not in itself be rather misleading; might not a census taken, we will say, in December give a very different result?—It is possible.

1012. Is it not the fact that at that time of the year many animals which belong to large farms are sent away for the purpose of grazing in the summer on much smaller farms?—It is possible, but the balance is so enormously in favour of these smaller farms that you might allow those differences, and still the balance in their favour would remain.

1013. Have you ever heard for instance that in Norfolk at that time of the year many of the large arable farms which carry a very large head of

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

of stock are almost denuded of them for the time being?—That is possible.

1014. Is it not the case that a great number of small owners take in stock on what is called agistment?—Yes; they are called lodgers in some places; I know it is done, but not to a large extent.

1015. Is it not more or less common?—I should not call it more or less common.

1016. It happens frequently, does it not?—Not more frequently I think, than, in the case of larger ones, if so frequently, because you more generally see a lay for cattle advertised by large farmers than by smaller ones.

1017. You handed us in also a table of articles imported from countries with a system of small holdings valued by you at 30 millions of money?—Yes, the figures are taken from the tables and put together; I think the total comes to pretty nearly what I stated.

1018. You say, in reply to Question 156, that nearly the whole of these products come from countries where there is a system of peasant proprietary or small cultivators?—Yes; with the exception of cheese and ham and bacon, I should think nearly the whole of it, or the greater part of it, at all events, comes from countries where there were small holdings, either peasant proprietors or small farmers.

1019. You do except hams and bacon as well as cheese?—Yes, because they come from America mostly.

1020. I was going to ask you whether your contention that "nearly the whole of these products come from countries where there is a system of peasant proprietary" is correct?—With the exception of those articles named, which articles are themselves most suitable for being produced in small holdings anywhere.

1021. I will take cheese for example; the total value of cheese imported in 1886, according to the Trade and Navigation Returns, was 3,800,000 *l.* in round numbers, but of that, 2,900,000 *l.* was imported from the United States and Canada, or a percentage of 76 per cent. of the whole?—Yes.

1022. Then bacon you also exclude, I understand?—I do not exclude it, but the greater portion of it comes from America.

1023. But you no longer maintain that the greater amount of these products comes from countries where there is a system of peasant proprietary?—I maintain that the greater portion of the 30,000,000 *l.* sterling I mentioned comes from countries where there are small holders, either as peasant proprietors or as tenants.

1024. I propose to go through them in detail; you no longer include, do you, bacon in those articles?—Bacon for the most part comes from America, and so does cheese.

1025. I find that the total value of bacon imported in 1886 is 6,159,000 *l.*; and from the United States of America and Canada the value of bacon imported was 4,600,000 *l.*, or again a percentage of 76 per cent. Again, I take hams; the total value imported was 2,244,000 *l.* in 1886?—Yes.

1026. And I find that 2,225,000 *l.* or 99 per cent. comes from the United States and Canada?—Yes.

1027. Then I find that 1,545,000 *l.* worth of lard was imported, of which 1,397,000 *l.* worth or 90 per cent. come from the United States and Canada. Again, I find with regard to salt pork that, out of a total of 437,000 *l.* worth imported in 1886, 304,000 *l.* came from the United States and Canada; of those articles, amounting altogether to nearly twelve millions, 83 per cent. come from the United States and Canada. Now I observe you include margarine; why do you include margarine as a product which comes from countries where a system of peasant proprietary exists?—I think that the honourable Member rather mistakes my intention. I said that this table showed articles worth in the aggregate about thirty millions sterling, the bulk of which come from countries which have systems of small proprietors or small cultivators; and I think you said you have shown that about twelve millions out of the thirty millions, or if you include margarine about fourteen millions out of the thirty millions, comes from other places.

1028. I think we may very fairly include margarine, because margarine is a manufacture, is it not; you can hardly call margarine the production of a small holding?—No.

1029. If you include margarine and cheese, together with the other articles I have enumerated, that accounts for 17,300,000 *l.* out of the 30,000,000?—Yes; I am quite prepared to make the admission, because it does not affect my contention, which is, that every one of those articles is pre-eminently suitable to be produced on small holdings.

1030. I thought that the table was rather used by you as a basis for argument, and that the fact of this great number of articles coming from countries where a system of peasant proprietary prevailed was adduced as one great reason why we should resort to a system of peasant proprietary in this country?—My argument was partly that; and the other object was to ask of those who were speaking of agricultural depression why these 30,000,000 *l.* worth of articles of food which this country is so eminently fitted by nature to produce should in these days of so-called agricultural depression be brought from abroad.

1031. But you then, I understand, proceeded to argue that if we had a system of peasant proprietary in this country, these articles would be produced; whereas, as a matter of fact, the great bulk of them are now imported from countries like the United States and Canada, where there is no such system?—Yes. But taking hams, bacon, and pork, which are the large items you name, no articles of food can be named which are more appropriate to be produced upon small holdings.

1032. Quite so; but with regard to the imports which you have quoted, and of which you said, in answer to Question 156, "Nearly the whole of these products came from countries where there is a system of peasant proprietary," it turns out now that nearly all of them come from America, where there is not a system of peasant proprietary?—No, I should not say nearly all; I am prepared to make the admission that a large proportion comes from America; but that does not destroy the suitability of small holdings to produce all these articles.

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

1033. In America they are produced on land held by occupying owners in almost every case, are they not?—Yes, and owners of small farms.

1034. And the tendency is for the farms to get smaller?—Decidedly.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

1035. Taking out the articles I have referred to, that leaves only 12,700,000 *l.*?—Yes.

1036. Of that, I believe, butter accounts for 8,000,000 *l.*?—8,141,438 *l.*

1037. Now butter, again, that we import from abroad is rather in the nature of a manufacture, is it not?—The bulk of the butter we get now is from Denmark; of course it is manufactured before it gets into butter.

1038. That is to say, that the small farmers who make butter may send their material to the manufacturers, so that the butter which we import we do not import from the small holders, but from the manufacturers?—Yes; in those countries, Denmark and frequently Holland now, there are manufactories to which the small holders send their milk and cream, and are credited for the amount they send.

1039. That leaves us with only potatoes, onions, and eggs, which are enumerated in your table, which, I suppose, you would contend are imported from small holdings?—I contend that the butter to the value of more than 8,000,000 *l.* is almost wholly imported from countries of comparatively small holdings.

1040. But I thought you admitted just now that the butter was imported direct from the manufacturers?—It is imported from the co-operation, if you may so term it, of the small holders. If you speak of Denmark the co-operative system is very much in vogue there, by which the holders and cultivators co-operate to produce butter.

1041. With regard to these other articles, potatoes, onions, and eggs, is it not quite possible that the preferential railway rates which we have suffered from for so long may have been the real cause of preventing our producing this kind of article in the same way and in the same quantities in which it is produced abroad?—I have no doubt that that interferes, but if you could show that it destroyed these trades that answer would be sufficient, but we produce as much butter at home as we import, or more; and it is the same with regard to cheese, and it is estimated that we produce half as many eggs at home as we import; therefore the trade does exist in all these articles to a very large extent, and my contention is that if you can do two-thirds of the trade you ought to be able to do the other third.

1042. I think I have sometimes heard you make a complaint of the want of effective competition on our part with foreign countries in these particular articles, and use that as an argument in favour of small holdings; you admit, as I understand, that we may suffer considerably from these preferential rates?—Yes; it is a question which I have not studied, but generally there is, no doubt, I think that some of the drawback to English producers is to be found in that direction.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1043. Are you aware that it has been stated that so unfair has been the system towards home producers, that actually on the line between Canterbury and London the fruit and vegetables sent by growers in the country to Covent Garden Market have to be shunted and put on one side till the Continental train, laden with vegetables from abroad, had passed so that it might reach London first; that was stated at the Chamber of Agriculture and great complaints made of it?—I was not aware that that was so, but I have no doubt that it is correct.

1044. You have very little evidence, I think, to give us from the evidence given before the Richmond Commission in favour of your scheme of developing and creating large quantities of small holdings?—Quite so; the Report of the Richmond Commission was against the peasant proprietary system.

1045. The Commissioners who examined into that system for England all reported more or less unfavourably to it, did they not?—I should scarcely call it an examination into that system, looking to the witnesses they examined.

1046. Do you mean the witnesses examined before the Commission?—Yes.

1047. I was speaking rather of the Reports of the Sub-Commissioners. In the case of peasant proprietary abroad in France, in particular, you have had some experience of their condition, have you not?—I have visited and stayed some time among them, but I do not profess on one visit to be an authority on their condition.

1048. One of their great characteristics, I think, is thrift, is it not?—I should think it is so. I have seen men outside their cottages whom you might think were in a very bad condition, but I have visited them in their cottages and found they were very well off.

1049. They buy as little as possible off the farm, and their wants, I suppose, are for the most part supplied by the farm itself?—Yes, that is the case.

1050. There is no doubt about the fact, is there, that the relative produce of all kinds per acre in France, where there is a very large proportion of small holders, is very much less than it is per acre in England, where we have more large holdings?—We have returns with regard to wheat and grain, but I do not think we have any information by which we could compare the produce per 100 acres of land in France and in England.

1051. We will take the yield of wheat and the yield of barley and the yield of potatoes; in all those cases the figures show, do they not, very clearly that the relative produce in England is very much greater per acre than in France?—It is greater, but you must remember that the best lands in France are not laid down to wheat, and as those who have travelled in France and Switzerland know, many and many an acre is sown with wheat which would not be laid down at all in England, and though it produces perhaps only 10 bushels to the acre, it is 10 bushels to the good that would not be produced in England at all; but that small yield goes to lessen the average for the produce of the whole country.

1052. Have

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Chairman.

1052. Have you any facts showing the relative produce of the small and large holdings in France?—No, I have not.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

1053. Would you contend, then, that the land which is devoted to growing wheat in France, on the average is worse in quality than the land devoted to growing wheat in England?—No, I do not say that, because Mr. Jenkins gives evidence in many cases of farms in France that are growing as much wheat per acre as in England; but I say that there is a large amount of land in France of an inferior character, such as would not have been cultivated in England, which is put to the purpose of growing wheat, and such land lessens the general average production of wheat per acre.

1054. With regard to the plan which you propose, the local authority, as I understood you, was to have the right of purchasing waste or common lands, and no one else was to purchase them?—Yes.

1055. Is it that land which you contemplate should be devoted to the creation of these small holdings?—No; I would confine my desire to the appointment of a Commission, or a direction to the present Land Commissioners, that they should survey all those lands, and get all the information about them as to their area and position and quality, and report generally, so that we might really know what those lands consist of and what they are fit for.

1056. You attach great importance to that information, of course?—I attach very great importance to it; we are, comparatively speaking, in the dark as to those lands, their condition, and their situation.

1057. Where and what are those lands which you propose should be surveyed in this manner?—All the waste lands. When I speak of waste lands I mean the wastes of manors, the commons, and generally the land uncultivated.

1058. You spoke of uncultivated land the other day, and I asked if you included downs, and you said yes?—I am not sure whether I said yes. What I propose is an exhaustive survey, including all those lands.

1059. Have you any idea that there can be any considerable portion of these waste lands which it could possibly pay to cultivate and reclaim in these days at the present prices of produce?—I should not like to give an opinion as to that; I can only say that I know parts of Dartmoor, for instance, which might be very profitably reclaimed; and I should think there is a considerable quantity of such land in the aggregate which might be very profitably reclaimed.

1060. As a general rule, of course, the land that you are speaking of must be poorer than the average of the land, otherwise it would have been brought into cultivation before?—It does not follow that all of it is. Taking the Forest of Dean for instance, some portions of the land there are extremely good land, but what the extent is one does not know without a survey. I was the other day at Dartmoor Prison, and they have turned the moor there into a perfect garden of cultivation.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1061. There may be exceptions of course, but is it not a reasonable supposition that the best land would have been broken up and cultivated first, and that what has been left uncultivated is probably the least good land?—That is very probable; but I should say that on this and other questions we ought to have information.

1062. Unless you had such information you would not venture to embark upon any such scheme, I presume?—Taking the New Forest, for instance, with regard to which in 1872 there was a scheme before Parliament to inclose many thousand acres. That was successfully resisted, but I am not disposed to say that there might not be many small holdings made with advantage around the New Forest without interfering with the use and beauty of the forest itself. I am not prepared to say anything definite, because I do not know, but I think this is information which we ought to have.

1063. In fact, your opinion would not be very far from this, would it: having regard to the millions of acres of exceedingly fertile land in foreign countries, such as America, which is now brought almost to our door by the inventions of science and by cheapness and rapidity of transport, it would be exceedingly unwise to embark upon any such scheme of reclamation of waste lands for the purpose of putting them into cultivation unless you had a very careful survey and report made, to begin with?—Yes, I should say that when people go abroad they have to reclaim the land, and they are a long way further off from markets than they are at home.

1064. Is there not this great and vital distinction between land reclaimed abroad and land reclaimed here, that the land now being reclaimed, especially in the West of America, is some of the most rich and fertile land in the world, whereas, from your own admission just now it is reasonable to suppose that the land which you have in contemplation to reclaim here in England is among the poorest?—I am not prepared to say that it is among the poorest till we get the information; I quite admit your argument generally. In further reply to it, however, I might quote the opinion of a large farmer in Suffolk; he says: "What a strange spectacle to see good land practically abandoned in England in the latter part of the 19th century with our enormous and ever-growing population. Why emigrate, with hundreds and thousands of acres of ready cleared and old-cultivated land in England, equipped with suitable buildings to be had at a small price." That is the opinion of a man of very great experience, a landowner, and farmer, farming his own land, and land which he hires, to the extent of about 400 acres in Suffolk.

1065. In the event of your scheme being carried out, have you no fear that there might be considerable risk of loss that would fall upon the ratepayers in the event of there being any further fall in prices?—No. Of course it would be impossible to advocate any scheme in which there should not be a possibility of risk, but I think under this scheme the risk is reduced to a minimum.

1066. At Question 577 the Chairman asks you this question: "Supposing your scheme had

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

been carried out 20 years ago, since that time the average value of land has fallen perhaps from 30 to 50 per cent." That was so, you said, and then Question 578 is, "Now suppose also, which would certainly be the case, that a proportion of your tenants did not succeed, then their land would be thrown upon the local authority at a value which might be 25 to 30 per cent. above the value which they could get for it." You reply, "I am not prepared to admit that; indeed I am prepared to dispute it by saying that small holdings during the last 20 years have not decreased in value to that extent, if at all;" is that so?—I do not think that they have decreased in value if you may reckon the rent at which small holdings are let as a test.

1067. I thought we were speaking of small freeholds?—I mean the rent or price. The Chairman is there asking me about small holdings; and whether you take the rent or the price, I do not think the decrease has been anything like the extent put to me in small holdings. That is my opinion.

1068. Do I understand you to say that you have had experience of the small freeholds in Lincolnshire?—No; I have had no personal experience in regard to them.

1069. Are you aware that many of those holdings have fallen very greatly in value?—Yes, but I also know that they were of an excessive price before. According to the reports the small holdings in the Isle of Axholme, for instance, were very high in price.

1070. You mean, I presume, that they were bought at high prices?—They were bought at a very high price.

1071. That, to a certain extent, may account, may it not, for the great fall that has occurred in their value?—Supposing there to be a great fall, that would be likely to be the reason for it.

1072. On the question of the fall in value, is it not the case that not only have those holdings fallen very largely in value themselves, but that a great number of people who have lent money on them have been ruined in consequence of the holdings not being worth anythinglike what they were mortgaged for?—I remember, in the report, the Isle of Axholme is said to be a "paradise of lawyers" in consequence of the enormous sums advanced not only on first mortgage, but on second mortgages, and that has gone to such an extent that they dare not enforce either the one or the other.

1073. Owing to the recent fall in the value of the property, that "paradise" has, I presume, been since converted into a place of a very different description?—Perhaps I may refer to some of the evidence given before the Commission of 1867, with regard to the Isle of Axholme. Summarising the evidence shortly it comes to this: the cultivator retains very little money for the purpose of cultivation, through the very high prices given for land, as much as 68*l.* per acre; they farm arable land and till as farmers, and in bad seasons suffer. They cultivate the land well and work hard, but it is the smallness of the holding, and the manner (that is the high price) they get possessed of it, that cause them to get on so badly.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1074. The land in the Isle of Axholme is very good, is it not?—Very good. The amounts given for purchase are raised by mortgage up to three-fourths and more, advanced by solicitors, often as a second mortgage.

1075. You have no fear, then, that any risk of loss is likely to accrue to the ratepayers from the adoption of the plan which you propose?—I have no fear of that.

1076. Do you think that the tenants will be always able to pay their way in all the circumstances that can be fairly expected to arise?—I do not call them tenants; I call them cultivating owners.

1077. Do you think that the cultivating owners will be always able to pay their way in any circumstances that may be fairly expected to arise?—Yes, in any circumstances that might be fairly expected to arise.

1078. Would you still think that would be so if we had a return of that long period of depression which was so very bad at one time?—The fact is, there has always been "agricultural depression"; agricultural depression is a recurring quantity.

1079. But I recollect periods of the greatest possible agricultural prosperity?—Yes, between 1850 and 1860, I presume.

1080. You mean, I think, the period of depression dates only from the year 1874?—1879 was the worst harvest, I think.

1081. But supposing that we had even two or three bad seasons in succession, do you think that this scheme could be carried out without danger of loss to the ratepayers?—I think there is no reasonable fear that the ratepayers would lose in any way.

1082. There might be some risk, you admit?—I admit there can be no scheme without the possibility of risk, but I contend that this proposal reduces the risk to a minimum.

1083. At all events there would be no such risk, in your opinion, as would cause you to hesitate for a moment in carrying out this scheme?—No.

1084. From what year especially do you date this great diminution in the number of small holdings; do I understand that it was from the year 1845?—The process has been going on mainly for the last 150 years.

1085. Do I understand that it has chiefly been since that date; it has been accelerated, I understand?—The most rapid process of inclosure was from the last quarter of the last century up to the first 30 years of the present century.

1086. And since then those cultivating owners have disappeared in great numbers, I understand?—I would not say since then; they have been in process of disappearing from the time the inclosure policy was adopted, a policy which extends back a long time. I have a pamphlet here dated 1787, written in favour of inclosure from an agricultural point of view, by a land surveyor of Bedford, and he stated, "It must be admitted that where in consequence of inclosure the number of farms had been reduced, and the land let out in larger farms, it has been productive of raising the rent of small farms in uninclosed parishes, and thereby dispossessing the most useful set of men in the community; and indeed raising

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

raising the rent of small farms in unenclosed situations has been attended with the same consequences as to the annihilation of the small farmer." Then he goes on to recommend that that class should be preserved.

1087. Do you think that the disappearance of these cultivating owners since 1845 has not been accelerated in any degree by free trade?—The great mischief was done before 1845, but the advent of free trade so largely benefited the landowner and raised his rent in every way that no doubt it made land much more valuable; and consequently there was less care for small holdings.

1088. It is the case, is it not, that in France and Germany and those countries where the greatest proportion of small holdings and peasant proprietors prevail, they have very heavy import duties upon agricultural produce?—They have import duties no doubt.

1089. You told us just now that in France particularly, the peasant proprietor bought very few articles apart from his farm, and that the farm itself practically sustained him?—That was a suggestion of yours to which I agreed. There are all sorts and conditions of cultivators in France, large and small.

1090. I was speaking of small ones; is that not true of them?—It might be probably true of the small ones in France as elsewhere.

1091. In any case the cultivators would be carrying out their business and occupation in those countries under what would be a great advantage to them, which the occupying cultivator would not enjoy in England?—I do not know in what respect they would have advantages that the occupying owner in England does not have.

1092. Do you mean to say that the protective duties now imposed upon imported agricultural produce in France, Germany and other countries have not either raised the prices of produce which these people grow or prevented them from falling?—Protective duties have never prevented agricultural distress in England, for according to report "agricultural distress," as it is termed, has been at its worst just at times when the price of corn has been very high.

1093. Do I understand that in your opinion these protective duties are no advantage to the cultivating owner in France or in Germany?—I do not wish to go into the question of protection, but I should say they certainly are not an advantage, and they have collateral disadvantages. Further, with regard to the cultivating owner in England, there is the great advantage of enormous markets close to his door, which are supplied from abroad at the present time.

1094. I quite understand the position with regard to the markets; what I want to arrive at is whether or not the protective duties abroad do give to the peasant cultivator in those countries where they prevail advantage or not?—I should think not.

1095. None whatever?—No, taking his position all round.

1096. That is to say you think, even supposing the duties raised the price of his produce, he has to give more for things he wants to buy and consequently he is no gainer in the end?—Yes; it is the old argument for free trade which I have ceased to use so long, for I thought it was admitted on all hands that protection damaged the cultivator.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1097. That may or may not be, but it is necessary to point to that system of protective duties, because it would constitute one very marked distinction between the position of the cultivator in those countries where you say, in your opinion, the system of small cultivators succeeds, and that of the cultivator in this country, if we adopt the system of small holdings?—I do not see how the question of protection comes in at all.

1098. I suppose then that you deny that protection confers any advantage upon the cultivator abroad?—Yes, as I have always denied that it confers any advantage upon the cultivator at home.

1099. It is the fact, is it not, that in every country where they have a large number of peasant proprietors they have also protective duties?—I do not know in every country. They have in France; but I do not know if they have in Denmark.

1100. Have you any apprehensions that it might lead to a return to the protective system in this country if you enormously increase the number of peasant proprietors?—I have not the remotest apprehension of that. They would be too much alive to their own interests.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1101. I want to call your attention to the questions and answers at the last sitting of the Committee referring specially to the Charity Commissioners; I understand your contention to be that the Charity Commissioners have permitted a large number of sales to take place, whereas they ought to have withheld their consent?—I expressed a regret that this land should by the consent of the Charity Commissioners have passed into the hands of private owners.

1102. You do not contend that they were breaking the law by giving their sanction?—Not by any means.

1103. Your proposition, as I understood, was that the Charity Commissioners ought to withhold their assent to trustees of charities parting with these lands?—Yes, except to the local authorities.

1104. By the local authorities I understand you to mean the County Council?—Any elected representative local authority; it might be the District Council.

1105. You would therefore force the trustees of charities to sell their lands only to a single purchaser; that is to say, taking the case of lands belonging to a charity lying immediately outside a small town or village, the only purchaser to whom the trustees of a charity could under your scheme sell that land would be the District Council or the County Council of that village or town?—Yes.

1106. That would depreciate enormously the value of the land, would it not?—That does not follow; it depends upon whether it is sold by competition or by valuation.

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

1107. Where would the competition come in?—If it were sold by competition that restriction would probably diminish the value; but if it were sold by valuation it would be precisely the same.

1108. Who do you suggest should be the valuer?—That is a question of machinery; there would be no difficulty there. It could be easily arranged, as it is in the case of valuation of any land in any district.

1109. Do you contend that the trustees of charities should wait until the local authority make them an offer for the land?—Yes. If you ask me what I would prefer I should like a compulsory law to transfer the whole of the charity land into the hands of the local authorities.

1110. Whether the sale were or were not advantageous to the charity?—I hold that it would not be disadvantageous to the charity if it were put in the hands of the local authority. It is well known by the Charity Commissioners themselves, that taking the management of charity land by private trustees that management has not been at all of a high class character.

1111. Supposing that the value of the land has gone down since the time when the land was impressed with the charitable trust, would not a compulsory sale of that land be highly disadvantageous to the charity?—It would be precisely the same as if it were a sale to anyone else.

1112. Do you consider that the founder had in view when he founded the charity the advantage of the small owners whom you are going to create, or the advantage of the persons amongst whom the charity was to be distributed?—The advantage of the persons amongst whom the charity was to be distributed.

1113. Then you propose to sacrifice those persons in order to benefit a new class whom you intend to create?—The sacrifice has been almost invariably made by the action of the Charity Commissioners in the past.

1114. Do you approve of their action in the past?—No, indeed I do not.

1115. If you do not approve of their action in the past, ought not your contention to be that they should take the contrary course to that which they have been taking, and to compel them to look after the interests of the persons intended to be benefited under the charity?—I hold that by selling to the local authority you would not be lessening the advantages to the recipients of the charity by a diminution of income, and at the same time you would advantage in a still larger degree the same class if the local authorities would let those lands in small holdings. That advantage was not contemplated by the founders; but it would be an extra advantage to the same class in the same localities where the lands are situated.

1116. It may or may not be the same class; it depends, does it not, upon the express terms of the charitable gift?—The chances are that some of the same class would be benefited; at any rate, it would be the rural population in the locality.

1117. Do you really contend that a compulsory sale of all charity lands at the present moment would be to the advantage of the charities?—I see no necessity for a compulsory sale. I would simply take the lands which are now in the hands of private trustees, and putthem into the trusteeship of the local authorities as they stand. I think that the rights of the poor would be better safeguarded in that way than by means of the trust which they are now in, that is to say under private trustees.

1118. Then you would set aside the intentions of the founder altogether?—No, I would devote the proceeds in precisely the same manner as they are now devoted. I would only let the representatives of the locality be the trustees in the place of the present private trustees, who have been a most unsatisfactory body, as the honourable Member will have had abundant proof as a Charity Commissioner.

1119. Supposing the case of land let to the vicar and churchwardens of a parish for certain purposes (which is a very ordinary form of trust), in that case you would replace them by fresh trustees, either the district council, or the county councillors?—Yes; I think, if I remember rightly, that was a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Trusts, which reported just prior to the passing of the Endowed Schools Act.

1120. I suppose you do not deny that those sales which have taken place with the sanction of the Charity Commissioners have been highly advantageous to the charity in every instance?—I have no doubt that the Charity Commissioners have done their best. At the same time I must say that the Charity Commissioners have sanctioned sales by trustees in cases where it has been very evident to those who have made inquiries, that those sales have had for their main object putting the land outside the scope of the Act of 1882. The trustees have been anxious to sell rather than put the Act of 1882 in force.

1121. Is not the law perfectly clear that your Act of 1882 does not compel trustees of charity lands to offer them in allotments in preference to selling them?—The 4th clause is mandatory on that point; the trustees are compelled to offer the lands to labourers in allotments not exceeding one acre.

1122. I would put it to you, is not the law the very opposite; does not the law permit trustees of charity lands to sell them if they please without offering them in allotments?—There is no doubt that the Act of 1882 does not cancel the powers of the trustees to sell; but unless they do sell, that is as long as they possess the land, the 4th clause is obligatory and without any qualification at all, and requires that they shall offer them in allotments.

1123. That I quite agree to. You are acquainted, no doubt, with the case of the parish of Sutton-to-Church, which occurred in Surrey?—Yes.

1124. It was a case which you brought up before the Committee which sat on Charitable Trusts Acts, I think?—Yes.

1125. In that case it was decided, was it not, that the Allotments Extension Act of 1882 has not taken away from the Charity Commissioners the power of authorising a sale of charity lands vested in them under the Charitable Trusts Act of 1853, and the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act of 1855?—I have never contended that it took away the power. I never contended that the

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

the Charity Commissioners have done anything illegal, but I strongly objected to their policy of selling charity lands to private owners.

Chairman.

1126. It would hardly be fair to describe it as the policy of the Charity Commissioners; it has been the policy of Parliament to induce the sale of this charity land; that is to say, the very fact that they have given the Charity Commissioners power to do it is an indication that they thought it desirable that it should be done, other things being favourable; and in your evidence you said incidentally that you objected to the policy of the alienation of lands held on behalf of the public, and that you would prefer that such lands should be transferred from the various authorities that have now control over them, such as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Charity Commissioners and the Crown lands authorities to the local authorities?—Yes; in any case they should not be allowed to sell to private persons.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1127. I think you will agree to this way of putting it: that if the Charity Commissioners have pursued any particular policy, it is the policy that has been suggested by the Act of Parliament under which they were constituted?—It is a policy which the Acts of Parliament have given them power to carry out if necessary. I should not say that the Acts encourage or suggest it, but it is necessary that the Charity Commissioners should have such powers, no doubt.

1128. Do you suggest now that the Charity Commissioners ought to have referred to the interests, not only of the persons who have been benefited under the charities, but also of another class of persons?—I have not made that suggestion. I have said this: that if those lands were transferred from the trust of private trustees to that of local authorities, then in addition to having the original intentions of the founders better carried out, there would also be the additional advantage of letting these lands in the form of small holdings, and so bestowing an extra benefit upon the rural population of the locality.

Chairman.

1129. As I understand, you have not committed yourself to any definite proposal with regard to the lands now controlled by the Charity Commissioners?—No.

1130. But you have said that those lands should be transferred to the local authorities?—Yes.

1131. I imagine that your proposal would be satisfied if those lands were transferred at a fair valuation?—Yes.

1132. In which case the charities and the object of the charities would not be in any way damnified?—They would be in no way hurt.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1133. A great deal of this land which was sold, and which during the last 10 years amounts to some two millions sterling, is building land, is it not?—I only know that it is real property.

1134. A great deal of it is land which, from being situated in the City of London and in big towns, has increased enormously in value; is not that so?—Yes; but I know that there is a great deal of land, in the form of agricultural land, that has also been sold.

1135. Do not you think that it is to the advantage of the charity that they should have their money in Three per Cent. or Two-and-a-Half per Cent. Consols, with a certain dividend, rather than in land with an uncertain fluctuating return?—I do not think that the advantage to the charity is increased in any way by the sale of these lands.

Chairman.

1136. Your proposal would provide for sale, only it would be a sale to the local authorities?—Yes.

1137. The funds, no doubt, receivable from such a transaction would be invested by the Charity Commissioners in the Two-and-a-Half per Cents. or in such securities as their funds are now invested in?—Yes; or there might be a simple transfer in the locality; my proposal was as you have stated it.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1138. I wish to ask you a few more general questions. Since the report of the Commissioners of 1882 on agriculture, to which reference has been frequently made, can you tell me if there are any fresh sources of information available with regard to small holdings in foreign countries?—I am not aware of any.

1139. One of your contentions, as I understand, is that the creation of small holdings would prevent the large number of agricultural labourers coming to the towns?—It would have that tendency.

1140. Has it had that tendency in countries where small holdings prevail?—If you take France, for instance, it is scarcely a parallel case to compare a country where the enormous preponderance of the population is rural, and where, therefore, if there is any change of population at all, it must be into the towns. France is rural and Denmark is rural, and Belgium is the most thickly populated country in Europe, the population being mostly in the rural districts.

1141. During the last 40 years would you expect in France to find the tendency of the population to be towards the towns or towards the country?—It would be towards the towns in France.

1142. Then in France the division and subdivision of land into small holdings has not had the effect of keeping the people in the country?—It has had the effect of making the rural parts of France excessively populated, so much so that if there is any change at all it would naturally be towards the towns. On the other hand, in England the rural districts are very thinly populated, and the urban districts very densely populated.

1143. Let me put these figures to you and ask you if you have any observation to offer upon them. In 1846, I find the ratio of the population in France was 75·58 per cent. rural, and 24·42 per cent. urban; in 1856, the rural population was 72·69 per cent., and the urban population 27·31 per cent.; in 1866, the rural population was 69·54 per cent., and the urban population

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

30·46 per cent.; in 1876, the rural population was 65·10 per cent., and the urban population 34·90 per cent.; in 1886, the rural population was 64·05 per cent., and the urban population 35·95 per cent., showing for each decimal period a steady tendency of the population to go towards the towns?—That is what one would expect to find in the case of France. The rural population being so very dense you would expect to find it flowing into the towns.

1144. Is it not evident that in France. at all events, the result of the division and sub-division of land has not had, at any rate, any startling effect in keeping the population in the country?—That is because the country was already so densely populated. Then, besides that, you must bear in mind that our general population in England in the 10 years has increased 14½ per cent. taking the whole population together, while in France it has been pretty stationary.

1145. With regard to the position of the man you called the freeholder under the scheme you have suggested, he will be subject, as I understand, to several conditions?—Yes.

1146. First of all, he will have to pay a yearly rent-charge which is fixed; a quit rent you call it?—Yes.

1147. I suppose he will get no reduction of that in bad times; it would be a fixed sum, which must be paid in any event?—It would be a fixed sum.

1148. He will have no power to mortgage, as I understand?—He will have a limited power to mortgage one-fourth the value of the land.

1149. And he will be bound to cultivate his land?—That is a condition in the Bill. The Bill would not allow a man to leave his land in waste.

1150. Who is to exercise authority over him in that respect?—That is a question of detail and machinery which the local authority would have to settle.

1151. Would they have to see that he cultivated the land up to a certain standard?—No.

1152. Then he might cultivate it very badly?—He must not neglect it or let it be waste. That might be a provision in the Bill or not, but I do not think it is necessary, because if a man buys a holding he means to cultivate it.

1153. He need not cultivate it in any particular way, I understand?—No.

1154. He might turn it into glass-houses for instance and grow orchids?—Yes.

1155. That would not be serving the purpose which you intended, would it?—I would not put restrictions upon him. I have no doubt if he were a successful grower of orchids, and had a good sale for them, it might be a good thing.

1156. It would not add to the food of the people?—There is the pleasure of the people to be attended to as well as the food. He might grow flowers for sale, which is a very important want in this country.

1157. I understand he would have no power of sub-division?—No, except with the consent of the local authority.

1158. How would you manage about his power of testamentary disposition; he would be obliged to leave his land to one son, would he not?—To one person. That is provided for in my Bill of last year, of which I have a copy here, if the honourable Member would like to see the details.

1159. You would, therefore, be giving sanction to the law of primogeniture?—I do not see how.

1160. Perhaps I should not say you are sanctioning primogeniture, but you are stopping persons disposing of their property as they please? No, I think not.

1161. Surely you are following the French system in compelling a man to leave his property in a particular way?—If he sells he must transfer the land by registered transfer to one person of his entire interest in the holding in the form prescribed; or, if he leaves it by will, it must be by a devise in favour of one person of his entire interest in the holding, the object being to secure a continuity of cultivating owners, and to avoid the evil which you refer to in France of dividing a holding of 20 acres up into 20 different lots.

1162. I suppose that he would have to pay rates and taxes, too?—Yes.

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Tuesday, 7th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir William Hart Dyke.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrence.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. ALBERT PELL, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

1163. YOU are a tenant farmer, I believe, and reside at Hazelhead, Northamptonshire?—I am a tenant farmer of land in one county, and farm my own land in two others.

1164. Where do you occupy land?—I occupy land in the Isle of Ely, and in Leicestershire, and in Northamptonshire.

1165. In Leicestershire and in the Isle of Ely you are owner as well as occupier?—Yes; I do not have much land upon my hands in Leicestershire; I have let there some amount in small holdings.

1166. You have been an active guardian of the poor also, I believe?—Yes, and I am pretty well acquainted with poor people's ways of living, and with their desires, I think.

1167. Both in the country and in one of the parishes of London?—Yes; I am an owner in St. George's-in-the-East, and my family before me were for many years.

1168. And as we all know, you are very cognizant with the question of local government?—Yes, with something yet to learn in regard to the new Act, and the application of it.

1169. You have taken part in the forming of provident societies, I believe, with considerable success?—Yes; for many years I have been interested in promoting them, and doing what I could to teach the people in the way of putting the Acts of Parliament on which they rested into their hands and explaining them. I never fostered the movement by any gift of money, or took part in the absolute management; I left all that entirely to the members after once they had been made acquainted with the opportunities they had got.

1170. The operations of these societies are in some way connected with the inquiry of this Committee, I think; the societies have themselves become hirers of land in some cases, in order to sub-divide it among small occupiers, have they not?—In the case of one society formed in a manufacturing village in Leicestershire, I said to the society, "You had better take land from me at the ordinary rent, and divide it amongst yourselves, dealing with it in retail quantities, just as you would with sugar or other articles of consumption."

Chairman—continued.

1171. Have you any experience of the tenants under these societies after the land has been sub-divided?—Yes. Of course I did not interfere with the question of whether members paid their rent to the society or not, but I have no doubt that they paid it to the committee regularly. I did look at the land to see whether it was fairly cultivated, and I was perfectly satisfied with the cultivation. I might add here, perhaps, that the society is no longer my tenant; they have become the freeholders of the stores; they have bought them of me; instead of being tenants occupying small holdings, many of these men are owners of their houses now. Their next step in the way of co-operation was to join a building society. They went a step further and became freeholders, and bought under the Building Acts.

1172. Then as far as your knowledge of these particular tenants goes, it is entirely satisfactory?—Yes; I was perfectly satisfied.

1173. The tenants appear to have done well?—Yes, I think they did very well.

1174. And they have saved money enough in some instances to become the owners of their own houses?—I do not say that the whole of those men, but a great number of them, subsequently joined in forming a building society; That was the first building society in the parish another one has been formed since. The place has grown very much; there were only about 580 people in 1860, and there are probably 1,200 now. The result has been very favourable.

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Chairman—continued.

1175. What effect have the bad times and the agricultural depression had upon these small tenants?—We had no agricultural depression that was serious while the society was renting the land of me. But in addition to the land of the society, which is let out in these small plots, not exceeding three acres perhaps in some cases, I gave an opportunity to others to rent a little field or two. The wives of those people were cattle rearers, and that system went on very well till the year before last, and then we had a dreadful time; prices went down and hay was very dear, and they all, except two, wanted to go. I said, "Very well, you can go, and I will take the land again;" but last autumn they wanted to come back again, and back again they have come. The people whom I have in my mind would be people occupying 20 acres, 12 acres, and 7 acres.

1176. Going back to the subject of the provident societies, do you think that that system could with advantage be extended?—I think it would be a great advantage to do so. Lord Wantage, who will, I believe, be a witness before this Committee, will tell you how provident societies have made use of part of his property in Northamptonshire.

1177. In those cases has the land been let at the same rent as it is let to the farmers in the neighbourhood?—Yes; no more and no less; but if I let the land to a number of these little men, of whom there might be perhaps 20 or more on a 12-acre field, I should certainly have more rent, because the collecting must be paid for.

1178. You mean that you would be justified in charging a higher rent for a very small holding in order to pay the cost of collection, and provide against bad debts?—Yes, but I daresay I might not charge so much as the society charge. The land let to them was about 37 *s.* an acre, and I know they let some of it to a baker for 3 *l.* He could not do without it, and he had it for a little time. But if the baker was a member of the society he would get a great deal of profit in connection with the stores. I may say it was a distributing, not a manufacturing society.

1179. You think the small tenants under this co-operative society probably paid higher rents than the farmers in the neighbourhood?—Yes, I know they did. When they began they had a meeting to settle what was to be paid for retailing the land; then they drew lots for the ground among themselves. Then there was a balance over, and they offered the land at terms very advantageous to themselves to anybody who would come and take up the balance.

1180. But in spite of their having to pay higher rents they did do well, as I understand?—They undoubtedly did well.

1181. With regard to your own tenants, those to whom you let 12 and 20 acres, they, I suppaid, paid the same rent as the farmers?—They paid the same rent, or perhaps a little more, probably a little more.

1182. But in bad times they got discouraged, as I understand?—In the bad times they paid me all they owed me, and some said they wanted to go. I did not require notice to quit, as I might have done. I might have held them over under the Agricultural Holdings Act for two years, but that could have done no good, either to them or to me. I said to them, you can go; but last year they all came back again. With regard to these tenants I might say that one is a carrier and two worked for me as little boys, as farm labourers, on the farm before the Education Act came in; one of those is still a farm labourer, but has 20 acres of land, and the other has become a sort of manager in a factory. He has to take the stuff to Leicester and bring back the yarn, and he requires therefore a horse or two, and he is very glad to have my land to keep the horse on.

1183 Have you had any experience of letting land in fruit countries?—Yes, I am happy to say that I have an improving acquaintance with that industry.

1184. Would you state to the Committee your experience in connection with that?—My experience is drawn from Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, where there is land very suitable for the growth of fruit, on the green sand. My practice there, and that of my brothers, who are joint proprietors of the property, is to take up ground as we think it is wanted, the very best land close to the village, which would make 3 *l.* an acre before we touched it, and then to double dig it and plant it and offer it to people in the parish at the old rent, and 5 per cent. upon the outlay that we have made upon the land for five years. At the end of five years it comes back into our possession, and then we say, "Now, would you like to go on with it; if so, come up and say what you are going to give." We have generally taken the offer of the men. Then we say, "Would you like to have the bit you had before"; and they say "Yes." In every instance I think they have taken the ground which they have held for the five years previously.

1185. In the first place he pays 3 *l.* per acre, plus five per cent. upon your outlay?—Yes.

1186. How much would that average per acre?—That would bring the land up to something between 5 *l.* and 6 *l.* an acre, with the planting of the trees for fruit.

1187. At the expiry of the five years, what is the average for the improved land?—There is nothing over 10 *l.* an acre, and nothing under 9 *l.*

1188. And what extent of land do they have?—I declare I do not know. I should think with the old gardens, as we call them (before we began there were very good gardens to the houses); we may have about 10 acres in fruit.

1189. How much does each tenant hold?—Some will take as much as half-an-acre; one man has nearly an acre, a very good cultivator.

1190. Those are rather in the nature of allotments than of small holdings, are they not?—They are not quite of the same character as allotments. You would not find on allotments, for instance, a Manchester dealer, as occurred last week on those gardens examining the prospects of fruit before the trade commenced.

1191. Is the value of the produce very considerable in proportion to the acreage of the land?—

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Chairman—continued.

land?—One tenant pays 14*l.* a year for his cottage and ground; that is, the old garden; and two years ago he took, I believe, 60*l.* for the produce, without what he took for the under-fruit in the spring.

1192. Are there cottages attached to all this land?—No.

1193. They do not put up any buildings on these small holdings, I suppose?—They build a little thing like a police-box or sentry-box to put the baskets in when they pick the fruit. Sometimes they put up quite a little shed which would cost only 2*l.* or 3*l.*

1194. You have every reason, I understand, to be satisfied with this experiment?—Yes. Might I add that it would be a dangerous thing to attempt anything of the sort, unless the land is exactly fitted for it. In the next parish, where the land is apparently just the same and just as good, it does not command above 5*l.* an acre for the fruit, and I do not think people are getting on well with it.

1195. Is it a question of soil?—It is a question of soil and climate. This village before the railroads were made, used to send up to Covent Garden Market two waggon loads a week of common fruit. They grow only common fruit, such as green gooseberries, never ripe ones, and plums and black currants. There has been a very extraordinary increase in the growth of black currants, and the different varieties of them have been very much improved by the growers.

1196. I suppose that you would say that railroad facilities are good?—Certainly. One of the first things done was, amongst ourselves, to make a railway from Ely to St. Ives.

1197. In your opinion the success in the instances you have told us of is largely due to the exceptional advantages of the situation?—Yes, I think so.

1198. And as I understand, you would not consider that any very large extension could be given in the creation of this class of holders?—No, I think it would be a very unwise thing, even in that parish, to take, say, 20 acres of land, and dig it and prepare it and offer it all at once to people. I should explain that the people here are not technically fruit growers; they are the common people, labourers and little traders, but they are thoroughly up to their business; they are expert grafters, for instance, grafting their own apples. I may add that they deal with Rivers, who are, I believe, the best growers of plums.

1199. Is this land that you spoke of inclosed land?—Some of it was an old inclosure. The parish was inclosed in 1847, but of this land which we are preparing for fruit very little then was uninclosed land; it has been old inclosures which have been converted into fruit.

1200. Is there much common land round you there?—We had a very great deal.

1201. And that was all inclosed in 1847, was it?—The parish of Wilburton was inclosed in about 1847, I think. Then there was a large inter-common, a common in which seven parishes were interested, which was inclosed subsequently, and of course the parish of Wilburton got a slice out of that. A great part of that is laid out in small holdings. Small allotments of land were set out in respect of property, either freehold or copyholds, in what I may call the mother parish. They have attempted fruit growing there, but it has not been successful; it is a little too low, I fancy.

1202. What compensation has been given to the commoner in that case?—The best possible compensation; he was the man who got the land. There seems to be a somewhat extraordinary view with regard to lords of the manor rights on commons. In this case my mother was the lady of the manor, and she got nothing in respect of any grazing rights upon the common.

1203. In this case, as I understand, the lord of the manor got nothing?—I think we got one-fourteenth of the waste, but then when this inter-common came in we got this advantage, to which I may refer, although it is perhaps outside the immediate question. Some of the allotments set out were copyhold allotments, and, therefore, began to bring in something to the manor in the form of fines on death or upon the devolution of property, so that in that way the the manor gained something.

1204. Do I understand that the commoners in that case became copyholders?—No, the commoners did not become copyholders. A commoner had no right except that which he derived from the ownership either of a house in the parish which had a common right attached to it (which I may say all houses have not), or in respect of what was called a toft, that is to say, a place where a house had stood some years before which had a right of common. Of course, when the inclosure took place, there was a contention between the parties who had and those who had not titles; it did not matter in the least to us how many of these common rights were established, the claimants fought it out among themselves; they took care, so far as they could, that no spurious right was established, and I think on the whole the proper people got the land.

1205. What did those commoners get in return for their common rights when the common was inclosed?—The whole of the waste was divided up among them except the one-fourteenth, which the lord of the manor got, and what was taken out for roads. In the case of this inter-common there was also something taken out to pay for the inclosure, but in the parish of Wilburton every person who got an allotment had to pay towards the cost of the inclosure proceedings.

1206. But as regards the waste every commoner got a proportion of the waste, as I understand?—Yes, as a commoner.

1207. Did he hold that as a freehold afterwards?—If it attached to a copyhold estate, the plot that was allotted to him would be copyhold, and if it attached to a freehold estate it would be freehold. When I say that the whole of the waste land (the "commonable" lands of course went to the people who owned them) was divided among the commoners, it is not strictly accurate

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Chairman—continued.

to say that the whole of it was divided, because there were three sheep-walks which belong to the parish, one of them belonging to the rector, one belonging to the manor, and one being an independent one which could be sold in the market just as railway shares could be, and the people to whom these belonged had to be satisfied because they had the right of running their sheep over not only the waste but also over the commonable lands for a certain time of the year, namely, after Lammas day.

1208. These people, as I understand, were all compensated by land and not by money?—Yes, they were all compensated by land.

1209. Now, do the freeholders who were created under this process of inclosure still remain, or have they been bought out?—I was making some inquiry about them last week, and I found that a great many of them remained; certainly that is the case upon the good land; the people are very fond of the land there in the district I am referring to; they are quite agricultural; there is no business of any sort going on in the place.

1210. Then there still remain in this district to which you refer a large number of small owners?—Yes. I do not know whether it would be interesting to the Committee to have the details, but I may say that on Saturday I went to see the officer who makes out the rate-book for this inter-common and our parish; he was a schoolmaster, and is an extremely intelligent man; and if the Committee would like it he would bring up to the Committee a map of this place, which would show them the land divided into a number of small strips, and the exact number of the holdings which exist in the parish and in the fen land.

1211. What I wanted to know was whether, in this particular case, the small freeholders were able to continue permanently upon the land; these men, I take it, must have been tried by the bad times, but, as I understand it, they still continue on the land which was occupied by their predecessors; was that so?—I can only say that not long ago I tried to buy one of them myself; an acre of land; I bid 100 *l.*, and the vendor said he wanted 120 *l.*; and he made the 120 *l.* for it, selling it to a little person.

1212. Has there been much sub-division of these small properties?—No; I do not think there is sub-division.

1213. How do the owners manage in the case of death; does the land go to the family, or do they leave it to one member?—I think they leave it to one. In the case that I refer to I think they wanted to sell the land, because two persons had an interest in it; I suppose there must have been a will which left the land to the brother and sister, and thus they sold it.

1214. Since these small freeholds were originally created, there has not been any sub-division on a large scale, at all events in your opinion?—No; some of the larger proprietors tried sub-division, but I do not think the land went off; the bulk of it is arable land; the people were frightened at the price of grain, and nobody would go in to buy.

Chairman—continued.

1215. Have the occupiers put up their own houses on the land?—There have been a few houses built by the people who hold these small plots, but the bulk of the new buildings in the village has been put up by way of a speculation; a person who had some property in the village which was copyhold, enfranchised it, and then built upon it.

1216. So that most of these people live in the village and cultivate the land at a little distance out?—Yes.

1217. Is the land far from the houses?—No; all the land, excepting the inter-common, is close to them.

1218. Do you think that the condition of the people has improved, or has it rather gone back?—I think that their condition has improved, judging from externals, such as the clothing of the people. They have good boots and good cotton garments, and the attendance at school is admirable, without payment of fees out of the rates. The people live, in fact, in their own simple way, and live well.

1219. I think you took some part in the formation of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company, Limited?—Yes, I did.

1220. You were on the board of directors, I believe, for a few years?—Yes, until last year.

1221. Lord Wantage is proposing to give evidence in regard to that matter, but perhaps you may wish to add something upon the point?—I went yesterday to see one of the estates at Cottenham in Cambridgeshire; and I should like to say that I thought the land was well cultivated, indeed infinitely better cultivated than it had been at the time when the company took it. It was then abandoned in a very poor condition; but what I saw yesterday was extremely creditable. There are very good prospects of cropping. There were a few people at work upon it when I saw it, and I dare say they work more in the evening; I found that there was a good deal of manure being drawn on to it.

1222. Altogether I gather that your impression of the condition of the land, and of the people on the land, was favourable?—Yes, certainly; but I may say that they do not come forward to buy land.

1223. There has not been a large demand for the land, I understand?—Not for the purchase of land.

1224. I do not want you to go into the details, but I would ask you generally, is the estate conveniently situated, in your opinion?—I think the one which I was on yesterday is well situated, it is near to the village, and there is a great deal of garden cultivation spreading all round it. It was in fact just the place where I should have thought a freeholder who would like to speculate in land would come in and convert some of the farm land into fruit land. There is a great deal of asparagus grown round there, indeed splendid asparagus is grown within 200 yards of this very estate; and if these men had capital, they might follow suit.

1225. If there was any considerable demand for

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Chairman—continued.

for such ownership, I gather that your impression is that this land would have been taken up more rapidly than it has been?—Yes, if there was a demand to purchase land. It is all occupied, except one little bit, that is very foul.

1226. You think that the people who cultivate plots of this size prefer to be tenants rather than owners of their plots?—I think that they would.

1227. Why is that?—I daresay that they are actuated by the same feelings that would actuate me; that they find they can do better with their money off the land than on it in the way of purchasing.

1228. In this case is not the purchase-money payable by instalments?—The purchase-money is payable by instalments on a regular scale, which I have here, if you wish to go into it.

1229. That being so, would these people have to pay very much more, in order to become owners, than they have to pay as tenants?—The annual payment would be more undoubtedly; the quota in respect of the capital will have to be added to the ordinary rent.

1230. If it is spread over a considerable number of years that would not make a very large addition to the yearly payment, would it?—No, it would not come to a very large amount; but it is something additional.

1231. I understand you to say that these people prefer to be tenants rather than owners, because they do not want to find the purchase-money; but if under this system they only have to find the purchase-money in instalments, and those instalments are so arranged that the annual payments are not much more than the rent would be, I do not see how the objection which you point out would arise?—In the case of a poor man spending 2*l.* more upon his allotment, if he buys it than if he rents it, is a great deal. He would say to himself, "2*l.* spent in manuring, or 2*l.* spent on super-phosphate of lime," which they use there a great deal, "would pay me much better than spending 2*l.* in purchasing the freehold;" and I can quite understand that feeling.

1232. Your idea is that the small addition to the annual payment would make all the difference, and would prevent a great number of tenants from becoming owners?—Yes; that, together with the feeling that if they have signed a contract to purchase, they have put their foot in it, and cannot get out. They feel that they cannot retire, or that if they do they leave a great deal behind them. The people that I have referred to have not bolted, it is true; but still it is something to feel that the door is open behind you.

1233. In your opinion they really feel more independent as tenants than they would as prospective owners?—I do not know whether they would feel more independent; I think they would be more independent as tenants; they would not have the mortgagee over them. So far as my experience goes amongst the people generally, there is not a great desire to purchase land with the view of cultivating it. There is, I think, and I am glad to say it is increasing,

Chairman—continued.

a desire to buy a bit of land to build a house on with a garden adjoining.

1234. You do not think that there is any large demand for small holdings from which a man could derive a subsistence?—I do not think that there is a desire to purchase such holdings.

1235. You do think that there is a great demand for such holdings to lease?—I think there is a sort of constant demand, and there has been; I doubt whether it is quite as general a demand now as it was 20 or 30 years ago; it is a demand which I have always found satisfied in the counties I have had to do with. It is obvious that 40 years ago when wheat was 55*s.* a quarter, and wages were 9*s.*, and tea was heaven knows what a pound, and sugar was proportionately high, an allotment was a valuable thing to a man; his wife gleaned, and he grew some grain, and the grain was ground, and so they got their bread at an advantage in those times; but now a man would be very unwise, in my opinion, to grow wheat for the sake of getting his bread. And in the case of the few people who do grow it, I think they use a great deal of it for pig food, mixing it with barley.

1236. I gather that your own personal experience, as well as your knowledge of what has gone on in the properties on the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company, is very favourable as to the condition of people who have taken up these holdings?—Yes.

1237. They are, you say, doing fairly well?—Yes.

1238. And they are cultivating the land well?—Yes.

1239. And I suppose they are a very good class of citizens, are they not?—As a class, I think they are very trustworthy and reliable people; and their rent I think has been better paid than that of the large farmers.

1240. Therefore you would hold, I presume, that it is very desirable, on general grounds, to increase the number of such people if it were practicable?—That question is rather too wide for me to answer; it depends upon how you propose to increase it.

1241. I understand you to say that you think there is no very large demand for such holdings, and I gather that you think such demand as there is, is already supplied?—Yes, it is being satisfied as it arises, I should say, within the scope of my observation; but of course I do not pretend to know what happens up in Northumberland or down in Cornwall.

1242. But if you were told that the demand was greatly increased from any cause, no matter what it may be, you would think it a very good thing, would you not, that there should be a number of persons desirous of occupying their land under similar conditions, and you would expect that they would be as successful as those to whom your experience extends?—I should be very pleased if the people who work for me, or who had to do with me, came and said "I think I can do with an acre of land, I would like to keep one or two more pigs or a cow." If I

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Chairman—continued.

knew the man was not a scamp, I should be very glad to have him coming to me and saying that; it gives the people something to live for.

1243. Therefore, I suppose, you would be in favour of giving any reasonable facilities for stimulating such a demand?—I may say so at once, so long as the facilities do not come out of the pockets of what I call the "forgotten" man; that is the ratepayer; I must make that qualification. Those would be facilities I should be compelled to contribute to, and it would probably place me as an independent letter of land at a disadvantage.

1244. Then your opinion, as I understand, is that the Legislature cannot do much in the way of creating these facilities?—The Legislature is all powerful. I do not know that it could do much honestly, if I may use the expression, in regard to the question. If there was legislation for the compulsory taking of land in parishes or villages I should like to see legislation enabling industrial societies to get hold of freeholds for co-operative stores. My experience with regard to those societies is that they are at an enormous disadvantage in England from the inability to get into a village. People are always saying, "Oh, you will disturb some old woman," or "you will give offence to somebody." My own experience has taught me it is very difficult for the co-operative movement to get on from the difficulty which exists, especially in smaller villages, to get a place where they can securely carry on their business.

1245. I was intending presently to ask you some questions about the intervention of the local authorities, but in the first place I would pursue the point which you have just put; you would not be opposed, as I understand, to giving some additional power for the acquisition of land for the purposes of industrial and co-operative societies?—I should not like to give additional powers for the purposes of industrial and co-operative societies to take land by compulsory purchase; I am speaking only of getting a site for building the stores.

1246. That is a point which is outside our inquiry; but I understand that you would not be in favour of giving them powers of acquiring land for the purpose of establishing small holdings such as you have been describing?—No.

1247. You would not, as I understand, give any additional powers of compulsory purchase to anybody for the purpose of creating small holdings?—I would not, any more than I would for the purpose of creating large holdings.

1248. I will go a step further and ask you would you object to giving to local authorities (to the new county authorities, for instance) power to acquire land by voluntary purchase, not compulsorily, but for the purpose of establishing these small freeholders or tenancies?—Do you mean with the primary view of buying it in gross and selling it out in retail?

1249. Yes?—All I can say is that I should not counsel the county authority doing that. I am on one of the county councils myself, and I should make a fight against such a proceeding, because I think the end of it would very likely be disasterous. However, I may be wrong upon that point; I am only speaking dogmatically in expressing that opinion.

Chairman—continued.

1250. Is it not the case that in many of these country districts plots of land are taken up by small cultivators at a much higher rate than the average rate prevailing in the district?—Yes.

1251. In such a case might it not be a profitable speculation for a county authority to buy an estate, say of 400 acres, and cut it up into smaller holdings of 10 or 20 or even 50 acres, letting them out at a somewhat increased rate, and possibly with arrangements by which the cultivators could become the owners after paying a certain number of instalments?—I think the local authority had better leave it alone; they would do better to leave that to arrangement between those who own the land and those who desire to take it. The particular case that you are putting to me, as I understand, is that of men who are so silly that they are lured into giving more for the use of the land than it is worth; I think if the local authority came in to help those men they would be helping the very worst class of man that they could help.

1252. Is that altogether a correct statement; may it not be worth a small cultivator's while to pay more for a farm of 10 or 20 acres into which he puts his own labour, than it would be worth for a large farmer who has to work with hired labour over a much larger area?—Talking of arable land, I do not think that a small farmer can compete with a large farmer in the cultivation of ordinary grain, or ordinary cereals, for sale. As I understand, the case which you are putting to me is that of a man who provides enough for himself and his family, and has a balance over, which he must take to market to sell.

1253. It has been represented to us that the small cultivating owner can go into a lot of profitable work which a large farmer cannot undertake; such, for instance, as poultry, fruit, vegetables, and other articles, and that in that way he will get from the land a larger production, proportionate to the size of his holding, than a larger farmer will get?—If the land is very good land there is no doubt he will, but to turn good land into bad land by petty cultivation with such a climate as we have got has not succeeded, and I do not think it is likely to succeed.

1254. I am putting it to you generally, whether you do not think that a small cultivator can afford to pay a larger rent per acre than a large farmer?—I do not think that he can afford to pay a larger rent; he does pay a larger rent, it is true, because there is no doubt a great charm about the thing, even in being able to walk about on a Sunday and see how the crops are being eaten up by the caterpillars, or the reverse, and people will pay for that pleasure.

1255. A man pays an extra price for the amenities of ownership, in fact?—Yes, as we all do; I have a kitchen garden, and I have no doubt that if I let it go to waste and wired Covent Garden for my cabbages I should be a great deal better

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Chairman—continued.

better off in my pocket than by cultivating it myself.

1256. If the small cultivator would not pay, or if he could not profitably pay a larger rent than the large cultivator, you think the speculation would result in a loss to the local authority if the local authority were to intervene, and divide an estate for the purpose of creating small holdings?—It would be very likely to do so. And then you have this danger, that the local authority would be the landlord, and a landlord elected by the very men who are going to become tenants of the land. Therefore, if the landlord did not satisfy their views as landlord, they would eject the landlord instead of the landlord ejecting the tenants. It may be very bad for the landlord to eject the tenant, but it would be still worse for the tenant to be able to eject the landlord.

1257. That assumes that these tenants would be the majority of the voters?—Every one of them would have a vote, and of course they would be very numerous.

1258. If the majority of the electors of the county are to be small holders in the position of being able to eject the county authority, that assumes a very large demand, does it not, for small holdings?—I do not know that it affects the question, but I may say I was not thinking so much of the case of the county authority as of the case of a district or union, where the people are brought into close contact with their nominees. Men may come to a guardian in the village any day, and put a case before him, and say that they want a certain piece of ground at a certain rent, and that they think the guardians ought to get it for them. The guardian to whom they come may not think that a profitable thing for the local authority, and he may not vote for it, but these men of course would have enormous power, and they would turn out such a man from the board of guardians and elect another who would satisfy their views.

1259. Assuming that there would be a certain amount of risk in such a proposal, I want to ask you whether, on general considerations, it might not be worth while to run that risk; I understand you to say that this class of cultivators or owners makes a most admirable class of citizens?—Yes.

1260. Do you think that the existing system of land tenure in England is altogether a safe or a convenient one where the land is in comparatively so few hands, or do you not think that it would be desirable to multiply the number of landowners by creating a great addition to this class of good citizens of whom you have spoken?—The county which I represented had innumerable landowners, but then they were landowners in the town of Leicester who had bought their freeholds. I do not suppose there is a leasehold in the town of Leicester, with its enormous population, which is now I suppose going on for 160,000; they are freeholders. It seems to me that those people must not be excluded from the class of landowners because they have put up a house upon their land.

Chairman—continued.

1261. I understand that you entirely approve of the creation of these freehold householders?—Most thoroughly.

1262. But you would approve also, would you not, of the existence of small freehold farmers?—Most thoroughly.

1263. This Committee is of course confined to the case of small freehold farmers; we are not instructed to inquire into the case of householders as such; but I ask you whether the general considerations in favour of the multiplication of this class of citizens might not outweigh the considerations of the risk of danger which you anticipate from the speculation in which the local authorities would be engaged under such a scheme as has been suggested?—They would not, in my opinion. I should be very much against such an experiment being conducted by any local authority who have got public funds to fall back upon. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer or a great department of the State in London liked to try the experiment, that is another thing; they would have to answer to the House of Commons for blunders; but as to these people, who knows their blunders? The city of Manchester has not made a success of owning and managing a large hotel built out of corporation funds. Educated people as old as I am are bound to watch the action and the consequences of action among local authorities.

1264. I do not think that there is any parallel or exactly analogous case, but there are a very great number of corporations who, like the one with which I am best acquainted, namely, the Corporation of Birmingham, have very large freehold property; it is true that is within the town and not farm property; it is house property; I am not, however, aware that, as a rule, they have managed that property worse than private landlords?—No, but they did not run a business on it; they have let it as an ordinary owner of freehold would let it. Leicester, for instance, has a great deal of land just outside the town, which is called the Freemen's Land, which is all occupied as gardens.

1265. Why should not the practice of Leicester be developed; supposing they were enabled to acquire more land they might let that land to tenants, and they might let it either as an ordinary tenancy or as a tenancy developing into ownership after the payment of a certain number of instalments; is there anything in the past experience of Leicester which leads you to suppose that the Leicester Corporation would not be able to control an arrangement of that kind?—With regard to that town, I should say that past experience shows that the people are able to do it themselves without the intervention of the local authority; that is to say, it is a town in which the inhabitants are small freeholders.

1266. It has succeeded so far as the creation of freehold householders goes?—Yes.

1267. Is there any reason why it should not succeed if the principle were extended to the creation of freehold farmers?—I think that an undertaking of this sort would have a better chance of success with a large manufacturing town than it would in the country, because I can quite

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Chairman- continued.

feel that there would be greater difficulty in getting a piece of garden land, even if it was half-a-mile, or a mile, or two miles away in the outskirts of Leicester, or Sheffield, or Manchester, than there would be outside my little parish, for example, in the Midlands. But then, again, if there were three or four good theatres in large towns, I do not know whether the people would leave them to go to the bit of garden at a distance.

1268. That is not exactly the case I am putting to you: We are dealing here with small holdings, by which we understand something a little beyond and on a larger scale than allotments; it is not a question of gardening. Taking a town like Leicester, for instance, there might be many people there who have partial employment in the town who would be glad to farm a piece of land of five acres, 10 acres, or 20 acres, from which they would derive the whole or a portion of their subsistence; the question is whether it would be desirable to assist them to undertake a business of that kind by creating facilities, and whether those facilities could be created by giving powers to local authorities to buy land in the first instance, and then to re-sell or re-let to these small cultivators?—I do not think that the Leicester people or town people generally, would desire to possess land with the view of getting anything off it in the spare time; what they would desire it for would be, what you call the "amenities of ownership." I can quite understand that feeling. The better they are off in the town the more likely they would be to desire some little bit of ground in the country if it could be sub-divided among them, something beyond the great park they have got at Leicester, where they could go and enjoy themselves; but there is very little spare time in Leicester for an artizan to go and work on the land.

1269. Your opinion, I am afraid, generally is, that local authorities composed of men who have leisure enough to give their time, would not make the best business managers of a speculation of this kind?—I think not.

1270. You think they would be apt to be carried away by sentimental or philanthropic considerations, and that the speculation would consequently be a failure?—I have one local authority in my mind now in which the united assessment of the majority of the board comes to 50 *l.* a year. There is one ratepayer who pays 150 *l.* a year in rates, he is off the board, and he is at the mercy of these little men such as I have described, and these little men if they were influenced and actuated, and pressed to go into any scheme like that of the acquisition of land, would never suffer for it; the loss they would have to bear would be perfectly insignificant, but it would be a terrible risk for the people who would have to be operated upon.

1271. Is it your experience of local government that the small people, the people who pay the least, use their powers as electors practically to confiscate the property of those who pay most?—No. From my experience in London, and in places I have described in the country

Chairman—continued.

in which I take part in the local government myself, I am bound to say that it is wonderful how wise and how well the little people act.

1272. In your experience do you know of a single case in which the have-nots, the people who have least, have combined against the people who have most in the matter of levying taxation?—No. I certainly do not.

1273. Then do you not think your fears are a little exaggerated as to the possibility of that happening?—I do not live in the Black Country.

1274. If you would take it from me that your experience would be confirmed by everybody who has any knowledge of local government, and I may remind you that our experience extends now over 50 years in the case of corporations, do you not think that there is not much danger of what you suggest?—I know that the local government of Birmingham is very good; I have one particular there in mind, and that is the administration of the poor rate. I know how right the people have gone, though they have been tempted very hard in the opposite direction; but beyond that I know nothing of the local government of Birmingham. I am thinking rather of the local boards and towns improvement districts, the little boards that are springing up all over the country.

1275. But even there I would ask you whether in your experience, or to your knowledge, there are any cases in which the poorer class of ratepayers have combined to secure expenditure which has been opposed by the larger class of ratepayers?—No, I certainly do not know that they have.

1276. As regards the question of diminution of small holdings, has there been any diminution of small holdings in recent years?—I think that there has been very little diminution, if any, in that part of Cambridgeshire with which I have to do. I doubt whether there has been any. There has been no desire on the part of the large holders to get more land, they can get nothing out of it. They got frightened with the prices, and when the land was vacant and derelict, the landlords were ready to take anybody.

1277. There was a time at the beginning of this generation, I suppose, when the tendency was to consolidate farms very much?—When I was 20 years of age, that tendency was very prevalent; it was encouraged by the taking off of the brick and timber duties. When we paid 6 *s.* a thousand duty on bricks people were very slow to build; but when the landlord found that he could get bricks and timber without duty, away they went and built. They consolidated their farms, and pulled down their old premises. That introduced the swell farmers, and that has not been all success.

1278. At that time there must have been a very great diminution of small holdings, I presume?—I am clear that there was; anybody can see that from the remains of the old barns and buildings.

1279. That diminution has not been compensated

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Chairman—continued.

sated for by any creation of small holdings since?—No; but I think there is a reaction now in the direction of getting small farms, but not so much small holdings; that is to say, farms of 100 or 200 acres instead of 1,000 acres. Where a man can get a little grass and do a little stock rearing successfully.

1280. The tendency at present is rather to sub-division than to consolidation, is it not?—Yes, I think it is at present. There is a tendency to do anything to get tenants.

1281. In your opinion, has that diminution of small holdings at any time been due to legislation?—I do not think it has; there is an idea very much abroad, I hear, that the General Inclosure Act led to the breaking up of small holdings, but the farms were very large in the open field time, as large as they are now. I do not think that the system of inclosures broke up the small holdings. In many places it enabled the small holdings to be established, and very many small parcels of land were set out in lieu of the common rights, which still remain small holdings.

1282. May I summarise your evidence by saying, that though you thoroughly approve of small holdings, you do not think it would be desirable that the Legislature should take any step to increase them?—I do not think that any direct step should be taken to increase them.

1283. Would you mention any indirect steps which you think would tend in that direction?—Some change in the law of the devolution of property with regard to entails might affect the question; but that is getting on to other ground. I do not know whether my views would be worth anything with regard to that point.

1284. Anything that made the sale of land easier would, in your opinion, tend to the creation of small holdings?—I consider that anything that would encourage the continuance of the possession of land in large lots by incompetent owners, is a bad law for the country. If any change of the law led to that land being in the market, I think probably the fittest men for the cultivation of land would come in and get hold of it, just as if you bring an article into the market (assuming that it is an article that is traded in), the fittest people get hold of the article and make the best out of it.

1285. Beyond alterations in the law which would do away with strict settlement and entail, and would facilitate the sale and transfer of land, you have no suggestion to make?—I must not be understood as making that suggestion, but what I say is, that I can quite understand that you might have a very different style of cultivation of land in England, and a different class of people coming on the land, and perhaps more small men coming in, with such a change; I must say, I would rather see a change come about in that way than by attempting to arrive at the same end by giving any local authority power to deal with the land, because that involves a perpetual entail, for the local authority never dies; and further, if the local authority is to apply this land to one particular purpose for cultivation by small holders, or for pasturing cows, again I say,

Chairman—continued.

I think that is a direct violation of economic laws. What may be the best thing for this year or next ten years, with regard to small holdings, may not always be the best.

1286. Why should the ownership of the land by local authorities tend to stereotype cultivation?—I suppose that the local authority would only be permitted to take the land for one specific object, as a railway company can only take land for the specific object of the railroad.

1287. I assume that the local authority would be authorised to take the land for the purpose of creating small holdings, but it would not be required to dictate the method of cultivation of those small holdings?—No; but what I had in view was this, that in the event of this enterprise not proving to be a successful one, the local authority could not back out and apply the land to other purposes, such as for buildings or manufactories to be put up, because interference with the private right in property has only been upon the ground that land is wanted for one particular purpose, such as a railway, and the State says you may have it for that object and that object only. If a railway does not answer it becomes disused, and the proprietors come upon the land again as you may see on some railroads in England; the land lapses back to its original use. A railway company cannot put houses upon it or sell it for farming purposes, and that is why I should be afraid that if you had a municipal authority, as the landowner limited by Statute to using the land for one particular purpose, you would stereotype a state of things which, whatever it may be now, may not be advantageous some years hence.

1288. Is there any other point upon which you wish to give evidence?—No, I think not.

Sir *William Hart Dyke.*

1289. We may gather, may we not, from your evidence, as a whole, that you are in favour of small holdings?—Yes.

1290. You do not object to their increase for an instant, but you think there is a process going on now in the way of a reaction in favour of small holdings?—I think that large farms are being broken up.

1291. You think that that is a process which had better be carried out according to economic laws, and on the principle of supply and demand alone rather than through the agency of any local authority, or any compulsory power?—Yes, that is my feeling.

1292. Generally speaking, that is not an unfair estimate is it, of your evidence?—No.

1293. With regard to those provident societies which you mentioned in the earlier part of your evidence, I wanted to ask a question with regard to the quality of the land that is there dealt with, was it good land?—It was fair land; it was close to a village; people could get out on to the land without going far from the house.

1294. It was generous land, strong land, that would repay cultivation?—Yes; land that no doubt 20 years ago made 2 *l.* an acre rent.

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Sir *William Hart Dyke*—continued.

1295. In part of your evidence you rather indicated that whether it was a case of a large holding, where a man was an employer of labour to a considerable extent, or the case of a man who with his two sons works the land himself, you consider the two cases identical as regards the prospects of the farmer; that is to say, at the present price of cereals you did not believe in a man on a small holding, however hard he strugged, making the land pay, provided that he only grew cereals?—I spoke only of agricultural land generally. Some land of course repays the spade better than it repays the plough, and that sort of land is better cultivated by spade. I am entirely in favour of a small farmer of 100 or 200 acres, where a man comes with his family and works the land. We have people coming down into the Midlands out of Lancashire, some of whom have been settled there four or five years, working with their boys and girls and doing better with the land than the midland people do with it.

1296. Of course in the case of the best land, assuming the man to work hard, it would pay him; but what I want to put to you is this: Taking the average of English agricultural land, light land, supposing the man to be assisted by a couple of sons, you do not believe, do you, in the possibility of that man's making a good return for the money and time he puts into the land, however hard he and his sons work upon the land?—Not with grain, at the present price of bread.

1297. That is your opinion as a practical agriculturist of many years' standing?—Certainly. At the same time I can understand, as I said before, a man craving for that sort of thing, and being pleased with it; and I rather respect a man who, though he does lose a little money upon it, has the enjoyment of the thing.

1298. You would make an exception, I presume, with regard to fruit?—Yes, in the case of right down good land near a village.

1299. Could you give the Committee any information upon this point which strikes me as being important; you spoke of fruit-growing as being rather special in its requirements; you said that it required certain climate and soil for success; and you distinguished between two classes of land, within your own cognisance, as I understood, on one of which, I gathered, there was a degree of success; and, on the other hand, you intimated that fruit-growing had been tried and was not succeeding. Can you give the Committee any information with regard to the acreage of land in England and Wales on which fruit could be grown at a profit, or with any likelihood of a profit?—Not at all. It has certainly increased very much in Cambridgeshire, around Cambridge, and in the Isle of Ely, where there is good land for it.

1300. I gather you might be inclined to urge that it is really a question of testing the land?—Yes.

1301. I suppose you are aware that in parts of Kent, for instance, splendid fruit is grown on land that would not take the cultivation of anything else; of light gravelly soil, for instance?—

Sir *William Hart Dyke*—continued.

Yes, but in Kent, as I understand, and in Worcestershire, the cultivation is more in the hands of large cultivators of fruit with considerable capital. The Cambridgeshire people are not men with so large a capital; they hold smaller plots of ground.

1302. You think that, at all events, so far as good land is concerned, where fruit can be grown with any prospect of success, the system of small holdings may, with advantage, be increased?—Yes, if there are good facilities for getting it away.

1303. You are evidently not a believer in the capacity of a county council, or any other local authority, of becoming a landlord and investing in the letting of land?—I should be afraid of that myself; I should oppose, so far as I was able, such a proposal; I do not think it is safe, because it is "heads I win and tails you lose," and if there is a loss it must come out of the pockets of the ratepayers.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

1304. I understood your experience applied rather to small holdings than to allotments?—Yes.

1305. Were any of the tenants of your own that you spoke of, of the wage-earning class?—Yes, certainly; I have just jotted down from the rate-book a few cases, to see of what standing the people were who were occupying the land. These cases are upon the inter-common land which I have been describing that was alloted to the parish. I took the cases at random, and I find the first I took occupied two acres and a rood; he was a labourer, and he rented. The next case was a man with 1 acre and 6 poles; he was a labourer; he is a tenant upon the land. Then came a little man with 1 rood and 28 poles; he was a labourer. Then came a man with 1 acre and 2 roods; he was a tailor, but he was a freeholder; he cultivated his own bit of land. Then came his brother, who was a labourer and a tenant of the land with three roods, and then came another brother cultivating seven acres and three roods, part of which he owned and part of which he rented; he was a jobber in cattle and pigs. Then there was another case given me as a labourer occupying 1 acre and 13 poles, but I find that he was a pensioner who had something to fall back upon. Then there were two clergymen who had got hold of little lots, one holding an acre and 3 roods, and the other about the same quantity of land.

1306. As I understand, you do not accept the definition of "allotments" which has been given, defining them as being bits of land held by a man earning wages, whereas small holdings are bits of land, by the cultivation of which a man makes his living?—In this case I made an arbitrary division; I would not take out of the rate-book what I thought were allotments, but I told the collector to give me nothing below an acre. We have a great deal of allotment ground on this inter-common. Seventeen acres of allotments were set out there, and they pay the full rent for it to the wardens under the Act.

1307. What

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

1307. What quantity of land, in your opinion, can a man earning wages cultivate?—If it is all grass land, as I was saying before, he can do with 20 acres of land; when the very busy time comes he will probably not leave his master, but he will hire labour, paying a labourer to do the work for him, so as not to lose his place.

1308. Your experience is rather that those occupying small holdings belong to the wage-earning classes?—Yes; a great many of them are absolutely getting the greater part of their income by handiwork.

1309. Then they are the class of people who have allotments rather than those who have small holdings, are they not?—Very likely some of these people have allotments besides; they are almost sure to have allotments also.

1310. Obviously some localities are more suitable than others for small holdings, and it may happen that where the population is greater the locality may be specially unsuitable for the purpose of small holdings; take, for instance, the case of a village in a mining district; I suppose you would say that it is almost hopeless to supply allotments in a mining district?—I should not care, if I was a labourer, to occupy land unless it was at an extremely low rent, such as would tempt me, always bearing in mind the present price of provisions; that is to say, that you can get bread at fourpence a loaf, flour being proportionately cheap also.

1311. Have you had experience of the want of pasture near towns and the difficulty on the part of the population of getting milk?—I have, in those very parishes which I have been mentioning; when the parish was enclosed there was something like 14 cows that used to belong to the commoners, which were fed upon the "ways" as they are called; and when the parish was enclosed we set apart a field for the people who liked to pay so much from the 1st of May to the 1st of November, to keep their cows there, and some did so for a great many years, but gradually the thing died out, although there are some keeping their cows upon allotments to the present time.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1312. Did you give them any arable land as well for the winter?—No; they grew some wurzels on the fen ground. They get a little ground for wurzle growing in the fen.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

1313. At a previous sitting of this Committee we heard something said about the roadside pastures having been taken away, have you any experience of that?—I never knew of any roadside pastures being taken away. I have myself, as a magistrate, fined people for having cattle on the roadside when they had no business there. The freehold on the roadside belongs to the adjoining proprietor, and the pasture there also belongs to him. The difficulty about using the pasture is got over in the Midlands by the adjoining proprietor mowing the grass. He cannot put horses or cattle upon it, because the local

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

authority would interfere with him and say that the horses or cattle must not be left on the highway, and so in the parish where I live it is mowed by the tenant of the adjoining proprietor and taken away. I am not aware that "the people," as the expression is, ever had any more right upon the sides of the highway than they have upon the commons; they have, in fact, no right at all.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1314. When you say "the people," you mean, I presume, people distinct from the commoners?—Yes.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

1315. Has there not been a custom of people feeding their cows at the roadside?—I do not think it is exactly a custom; it is traceable to the earlier Inclosure Acts passed during the war, about the beginning of this century. In the Midland Inclosure Acts it is said that sometimes the fields were set out without any requisition on the part of the commoners to enclose the road. The right of way was given through a man's allotment in place of the open fields, with a condition in the Act that whenever the proprietor of one of these allotments encloses it the grass is to belong to the surveyor of the highway, and he may sell it or let it. That was properly put in by the Legislature to do what they could against cattle being allowed to graze over an enclosed road.

1316. I am thinking, of course, of the difficulty of getting pasture anywhere on the part of some people, and I understand you to say that you are not aware of this power with respect to roadside pasture having been taken away in recent times, and so the available pasture in a district being diminished?—I never knew anybody claim the right to graze upon the highway, except those who had some ostensible right to it.

1317. When you said that you would not favour an extension of the system by throwing any burden upon the rates, I take it that you would be in favour of extending the class of small holders by voluntary arrangement rather than by compulsory legislation?—Yes, I should desire to see any obstacle which at present exists whether legal or otherwise, to the sub-division of land, removed so as to give every opportunity for the state of things which in my mind is desirable in England, that is to say, that you should have as many as you can taking part in the cultivation and occupation, and indeed I may say, also in the possession of the soil.

1318. And in parts of the country where there is, as one may say, a provoking difficulty in getting such small holdings, would you be in favour of anything being done to stimulate the extension of such small holdings?—I can truly say that I have never come across a case of that sort. We had something like the beginning of one in the union where I live in Northamptonshire, where some people were advised to put a recent Act in force by which the board of guardians can provide allotments. We met that by immediately getting some of our body to

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

go to the village and see whether private arrangements could not be made for the possession of this land, and we got it in a very little time. That I may say is the only time that we have ever had applications from the labourers in Brixworth Union for the application of that Act. But I am quite clear that there would be no reluctance on the part of the best guardians to put the Act in force if it was needed.

1319. When you speak of distrusting the discretion of an ordinary authority letting this land as tenancies, it is not, as I gather, because you have experience of their dealings in that respect, but only that you doubt them?—It is only that I doubt them.

1320. If they entered into a scheme of this sort surely they would have a strong motive to make it succeed, even as a money transaction, would they not?—I hardly know what is meant by a scheme of this sort.

1321. I mean a scheme of letting out small holdings by the local authority; the local authority obtaining land for the purpose, and letting it out. I understand you to express a great doubt as to their power or discretion in undertaking such work?—If I am to understand that the scheme is, that the local authority should have power to acquire land compulsorily, the ground and justification of such power being, that when they have so acquired it, they would devote it to one particular use; namely, letting it out to what are called small or poor men; if that is the scheme, I am entirely against it.

1322. Without their getting powers to acquire it compulsorily, power might be given by legislation to the local authorities to acquire land in a fair way for that purpose; would you then distrust their discretion?—If power was given them to buy land when they saw their way to do it, that would be less objectionable; but I think limiting the use of the land afterwards is dangerous. I think the vulgar idea among workpeople, as I have heard some express it, is that we ought not to be allowed to lay down land to grass now-a-days; they consider that it takes the food out of the mouths of the labourers, and that it brings down wages, and therefore we ought not to be allowed to do it.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

1323. I understood you to say that a reaction in favour of small holdings is going on to a great extent in the Midlands?—Yes.

1324. I believe that men come down from Scotland to Lincolnshire, for instance, and work land, with the assistance of their sons?—Yes.

1325. Has not the result of that been extremely prejudicial to the labouring men already in the parish?—No, the census of our parish has not dropped in consequence.

1326. But you must remember that this is a very recent matter, is it not; it is only within the last two or three years that this reaction has set in; do you not find that farms that used to be 500 acres are now let out in small farms of

Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

from 100 to 200 acres commonly in Northamptonshire or Leicestershire?—Yes, there is a little less employment of hired labour, and it would be natural that there should be.

1327. In consequence of the different sort of farmer who has now come upon the land who is a working man himself, and whose sons work with him, that change has come about?—Yes.

1328. Would not the result of that change be that the labourer must leave the country unless some provision of the kind that has been proposed is made for him?—There is no doubt that they do so with great advantage to themselves, and with great advantage to the community. It is the commonest thing in the world for a young man of about 18 or 20 years of age to come and say, Can you get me a place on a railway or on one of Pickford's vans in London; and they go into the towns, and it is a good thing for them.

1329. But if this change is carried out to any extent the result will be, will it not, that there must be a very large displacement of the agricultural labourer, who must, therefore, suffer?—There would be a great improvement in the cultivation of the land. I think the man who is up early in the morning with his children at work is a better man for the land than the agricultural labourer.

1330. You do not appreciate my point. I am not dealing with the land, but with the labourer. Is not the result of such a change extremely prejudicial to the agricultural labourer, and that he must go unless some provision is made providing him with land?—Not at all, I think.

1331. How is he to be provided for in such an instance; supposing a farmer comes and brings three or four sons with him, is not the agricultural labourer prejudicially affected by the different method pursued by this new class of farmers?—The young labourers will go out to some other employment elsewhere.

1332. Then, in short, you do displace the labourer by such a method?—Yes; or he displaces himself.

1333. Unless some provision is made for keeping him upon the land he must go altogether, or at all events that would be the tendency?—Yes; and his circumstances would probably be improved by his so doing, at least so far as my experience goes. I have actual cases in my mind where men have gone and have improved themselves.

1334. Assuming that the local authority should become the owners of land, the possibility or the probability of loss is much less now, is it not, than it would have been some years ago, in consequence of the low price of land?—Yes.

1335. The price could not be very much lower than it is now, could it?—I suppose it is very cheap now, especially bad land; I do not think that the very good land has ever dropped much in value; I mean land that cost 100*l.* an acre 50 year ago; that has kept its value, I think.

1336. I think

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Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

1336. I think I could show you some land which cost 160 *l.* an acre 50 years ago and would not now make 60 *l.*?—That was dangerous land always.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

1337. I think you have seen the Small Holdings Bill that was introduced last year, have you not?—I have only just looked this morning at the marginal notes to it; I think I know generally what its object is.

1338. The Bill as put upon the Table of the House last year provided that a man was to pay down a fourth of the value, and the remaining three-fourths was to remain a debt to the local authority to be paid in form of rent; do you think many men would care to take land on those terms?—I understand he was to pay rent as long as he lived, it was a sort of purchase of the goodwill.

1339. He pays a fourth of the value and the rest remains as rent to the local authority. In your opinion would men care to become owners of land on those terms, or would the debt which would for ever remain upon the land be an objection in his mind?—I do not understand whether that person having paid one-fourth could ever will the holding away.

Chairman.

1340. Let me put a case to make it clear: assuming that a property is worth 400 *l.* in the market, and that it is bought for 400 *l.* by the local authority, the local authority would offer it to a small holder who, under the Bill, would have to find 100 *l.* in cash, and the local authority would leave 300 *l.* as a permanent first charge upon the holding; the owner would pay at the rate of 4 per cent. interest upon that 300 *l.* permanently, and he would be absolute owner of the whole property subject to a permanent fixed quit rent of 12 *l.* a year?—Yes, I follow that.

1341. The position then of the cultivator would be that he would be owner subject to a quit-rent of 12 *l.* a year. The position of the local authority would be, that it was owner of this quit-rent of 12 *l.* a year, which would be sufficient to pay the 3 per cent. interest for the loan from the Government, and to establish a sinking fund of one per cent., or half per cent., as the case may be; so that at the expiring of a fixed number of years, say 50 years, the local authority would be absolute owner, free of all charge of a quit-rent of 12 *l.* a year?—May I ask is it part of the scheme that if a man fails to pay the quit-rent he sacrifices the fourth part; that is the 100 *l.*?

1342. Yes, I suppose so; it is a first charge?—If he fails to pay the quit-rent for a year or two years, that is, after allowing him decent time, he would have to go out, as I understand.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

1343. Do you think men would care to take up land on those terms?—I do not think they would myself.

1344. You think, possibly, that the feeling of being in debt to such an amount would be an objection?—The feeling that he might never see that 100 *l.* again if he got into difficulties and was unable to pay the quit-rent (and difficulties happen even to the best man) would operate upon the mind of a prudent man against coming into such a scheme.

1345. They would prefer to rent land of such a landowner as yourself, who let them go out in bad times and come in again when times were better?—I ought to say at once, that the land where I let them do that was grass land. I should not have been so ready to let them off if it had been plough land.

1346. I take it that some of these men bought the land outright, and had small holdings; is that so?—No, I have never sold a single plot to a labourer; the factory owners have bought some.

1347. Do you sell to the company you have been telling us of?—No, I had to do with the company, the object of which was to enable small people to acquire freeholds upon annual payments, paying down a sum of money. It was very much like the scheme of the Bill, that is to say, paying down to begin with a round sum, and going on for a certain period of years paying a rent-charge upon the land, at the end of which time they became absolute owners.

1348. There was no capital required to be found to purchase, as I understand?—They want capital when they come on. I have one case in which I could state to the Committee exactly what the man did. He took a house of the company which was valued at 80 *l.*; he took also 9 acres 1 rood 21 perches of pasture, and 2 acres of arable. The whole thing was valued at 810 *l.* He paid down to the company on account 150 *l.*, that left a balance of 660 *l.* against him to clear off, on which he pays 18 *l.* 2 *s.* 6 *d.* half-yearly, and these instalments defray the principle and interest at 4 per cent.

1349. There is between 6 and 7 per cent. he pays upon the 600 *l.*?—He pays, to begin with, 150 *l.* upon 810 *l.*, that is not a fourth, so that it is rather better terms than the local authority would require in the hypothetical case that was put just now.

1350. You have some experience, I suppose, of men, who to satisfy this land hunger, as it is called, have bought, say, 500 *l.* worth of land as small holdings?—I do not know that I can call to mind a single instance of a man who has bought an ordinary small bit of agricultural land for the sake of occupying it in the ordinary way in which agricultural land would be occupied; but I know a great many instances where they have bought it to build upon.

1351. Do you know an instance where small tradesmen who have realised a certain amount of money in business have invested it in small farms?—Yes.

1352. As a rule, did they farm it themselves?—Yes, in the two cases which I have in my mind they farm it themselves; one of the men was a little draper, but he has not been fortunate.

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

1353. You said just now that you have known many instances of men renting land at too dear a price for the love of holding land?—Yes, I think a great deal of land has been taken in that way.

1354. What has been the effect upon the land?—They have worn the land out, and the land has worn them out.

1355. What has become of the land afterwards?—It goes back into the hands of the owner frequently to be put back into a little farm or joined to a farm.

1356. I suppose that land would not fetch the same rent again for a time?—No. There again I must say that is land upon which the plough would stand a better chance that the spade.

1357. I was speaking more of holdings of 25, 30, or 50 acres, which this Committee has more particularly to consider?—Yes.

1358. Take a man with 25 acres of grass land; can you tell us from any instance that you know of, how that man pays his way, and makes his living out of the land?—Yes, I know instances among my own people.

1359. Would you from practical experience tell us how a man with 20 acres of grass land sets to work to make it pay?—I know one case, that of the widow of a foreman of mine; she keeps cows on the plot I am thinking of; she has no arable land there. She has a nice piece of land to dig close to the village, where I dare say she may grow a few roots. She keeps cows and sells butter.

1360. How many cows does she keep?—She has taken a bit more land in another parish, and she and her son have now, I dare say, 20 head of stock. They have now 40 acres of land altogether. I recommended her to give up butter; it could not possibly pay to sell butter; I recommended her to sell milk, as it was a manufacturing village; she began that but it did not do very well.

1361. Why not?—Because she expected the people to come to the door for milk; I said, "You must go round and sell it yourself," and she did so, and she is doing pretty well now. She makes a few cream cheeses, but directly she took the milk to the door she began to do pretty well. People will go a distance for a pot of beer, but you never find anybody go far for milk; at any rate they do not in London.

1362. I suppose that her trade would be considerably injured if anybody else tried the same thing alongside of her there?—There are one or two others in the same village doing it.

1363. Are they all doing well?—Pretty well. I know she pays her rent regularly, and she does not look so woe-begone as she did when she pursued butter making. The other little tenant I have in my mind occupies about 20 acres; he does make a little butter, but he uses most of his milk for his stock and pigs; he fats pigs.

1364. Do you think that by farming 20 acres he can get a living?—He tried to get a living on 20 acres for two years, very much against my advice; he is a splendid labourer, and can make 18*s.* to 20*s.* a week all the year round. I said to him, "Keep to your labour and you will do better."

1365. Did this man make a living off the 20 or 25 acres?—No. I was just going to say that he tried it; he gave up his labour and tried to get on on the land alone, but after two years he had to give it up; he was one of the persons who gave up my land two years ago. He has gone back to day labour and come back to the land.

1366. Do you think that a man can work profitably this amount of land, provided he has some other work as well?—I think so.

1367. But without it you do not think he would make a living?—I do not think that he would do much with it. I am speaking of ordinary grass land to keep a few cattle on.

1368. You attach great importance, I presume, to a man being able to have milk for his family?—No; I am not one of those who do attach importance to that. Milk is dear food, I think. I know pretty well about the economy of a labourer's house, and how the labourer lives.

1369. I was speaking of places where the farmers do not sell or give milk?—Of course if the farmer gives milk it is a profitable thing for the labourers to accept it, but I think that milk is not a cheap food for a man to bring up his children on.

1370. Do you not think that it is a necessary food?—I do not think that it is a cheap food. I am not a teetotaller, though I am a temperance man, and I think a little beer along with other things rears a child better than milk. I am speaking upon this point from inquiry among mothers of young men who have grown up in that way and know what the children have had to rear themselves upon. Milk is a dear food for the people, and no farmer will sell milk to labourers.

1371. That is why the small holders who sell milk by taking it round can make a living, I suppose?—They walk round and take the money, but a farmer would not have people coming up to the back door wanting a half-pennyworth of milk, and to borrow a jug; that would never pay.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1372. We have had a Table put in showing the large quantity and the great value of the smaller articles of food which are imported from abroad, and which include cheese, butter, margarine, lard, poultry, bacon, hams, fish, salted pork, potatoes, onions, and eggs; can you account for our not being able to produce those things at home, and being dependent upon such an enormous importation of them as now comes from abroad?—There are no statistics under this roof that will show what quantity of eggs, for instance, are produced in England. One sees from the Board of Trade Returns the great increase which there is in the importation, but there is no means of knowing what quantity is produced in England. I am inclined to think that the production of eggs in England is enormous, and is increasing very largely. And then with regard to butter, I fancy that nothing in the world can be better for the people than good butterine. They buy good butterine at a lower price

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

price than they buy bad butter; it keeps better and it is better for cooking. There are good reasons why butterine should be taken up by the people.

Sir *George Campbell.*

1373. When you speak of butterine, is it the same as margarine?—Yes. With regard to bacon I find among my own people that there is a great change coming over them in their taste with regard to chilled meat, both beef and bacon. They are going back to English food, and it is very difficult to make out why they do so; they have to give more money for it. Everything that I feed I kill. There is little meat goes off my farm alive, and some of it goes to these co-operative stores. I often wonder why the people will give the price they do, because the meat is rather dear that I send in; I suppose they find it wear better. Then they bring their own pigs now to the co-operative stores. A shareholder, for instance, has a pig to sell, and the manager and the committee buy. The man gets a good customer for it in the provident society, and the society gets very good meat. This very society are now killing their bacon in preference to buying American bacon; they never bought anything but the very best American bacon. But there has been a change, and the English bacon is coming back to their table.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1374. You do not think that there is anything striking in the large amount paid for imported meat of that description?—It is very wonderful as showing the power which the English people have to eat up foreign commodities. England has never attacked the foreign produce of any country yet that it has not eaten it out, as you will see if you read history. It has got to settle with America yet; we are trying the experiment with that country now, but it has eaten out Spain, it has eaten out France, and it has eaten out Germany.

1375. It has been suggested to us that the reason why these articles come in in such great quantities from abroad, is that they are produced on small holdings, and that if we had some such system in England we should be able ourselves to supply that want; do you agree with that suggestion?—You would be very sorry to eat an egg from poultry reared on a small holding in England; it would be a very poor and fusty thing even if it was fresh. It is the climate that favours them abroad for producing poultry. I have just come from Italy and France where I have been seeing what I could of the agriculture there; the climate is very favourable for poultry. They get their eggs earlier and it is drier; it is like what we experience in a dry year with our pheasants; you do not have so much loss among the young birds.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

1376. I see in the Agricultural Returns that in Leicestershire there are 2,403 farms varying between 5 acres and 20 acres; do you think that the majority of those farms are farmed by men who are labourers, or who have other occupations besides that of farming?—I should think that

Mr *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

the majority are farmed by people of other occupations, such as bakers and little drapers and blacksmiths.

1377. And you think that the holding of a farm varying from 5 to 20 acres in Leicestershire is a considerable help to those people?—It is useful to them. Most of them have to keep a horse, and that is much more cheaply kept upon grass land in the summer than anywhere else.

1378. Do you think if it were possible to introduce a clause either voluntary or compulsory for the increase of these small holding of from say, 5 to 20 acres, it would be for the public good of this country?—If they could with certainty pay their rent I should say it would be.

1379. I find also, that in Leicestershire there are 991 farms of between 50 and 100 acres; do you know many farms of that size?—Yes, Leicestershire is grass land, a great part of it, and I can quite understand there being a great many hirings and holdings of 50 acres.

1380. Those would, I suppose, be holdings by men who do nothing else but farm their own farms?—Yes; a 50-acre man would be a large butcher very likely, or a salesman wanting to hold a hundred head of stock for a day or two. There are a great many of those people in Leicestershire.

1381. What would be the size of a farm in Leicestershire, on which a man would comfortably farm and do nothing else?—A man with a family of five, I think, if he had got the requisite capital and kept it on the land, might get along with 60 acres of grass land.

1382. And bring up his family fairly comfortably?—He would never keep the children on the land; he would be sure to put them to factory work.

1383. You think that would be the size of the farm which would encourage the heads of a family, the husband and wife to be thrifty, industrious, and do their very best for their children, and give them as good a start as possible?—No; the view I took of it when I hesitated a bit, as to what amount of land would find a man occupation all the year round, is that with a farm of 60 acres, with hedge cutting, mowing, and so on, looking after the stock, and the wife looking after the dairy, a man could employ his family until the boys and girls began to grow up, and then they could not resist the factory. A girl earns 11 *s.* a week at a factory.

1384. Would not that be an excellent start for such children who would have to go to the towns, to the factories?—They would not have to go far to the towns; the country is filled with machinery in the villages. Where they had hand frames when I was young they have steam-power now, and that takes the young people off; they could not work at the old frame, but now they come to the roundabout frames, as they are called, and get no end of money, and the little ones do the seaming; they would not keep those children on the land.

1385. There are a large number of farms in Leicestershire, varying from 300 to 1,500 acres; how many labourers, as a rule, would there be on each of those farms? A 300-acre grass farm would require one shepherd all the year round,

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

and in winter a man to help him in the hedge-cutting (he would not do that all himself), and if there was any extra work, like draining, to do, I should think that on a 300-acre farm of pure grass land, where no horses are kept, a man and a-half would do all that is wanted; that is to say, one man during the whole year and another during half the year.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

1386. In the man and a-half do you include the master?—No; the master would do nothing but ride round.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

1387. Would you go so far as this, that you would do everything to encourage in a county like Leicestershire, where there are industrial villages, that there should be as many as possible settled to some extent upon the land, where they or their children could have other occupations, either on adjoining farms, or still more, at the various industries cropping up in the villages?—Yes; I am pleased to see a number of people working on the land, because the physique of the people is finer; we have a better race of people for one thing, and you get a more intelligent race of people; the agricultural labourers are among the labouring classes the most intelligent members of the community.

1388. And when they go to the towns they generally pick the plums of the situations?—When they get to the towns their minds are centred on one spindle; they are slaves to the machine; they have not to keep up their knowledge of nature and of animal life, nor yet so much of human nature. I think that the agricultural labourer is a very shrewd man in dealing with his fellow creatures, quite as shrewd as the townsman.

1389. Do you think that for the sake of the manhood of the country as many people as possible should be brought into close contact with nature and with animal life?—Yes, I like it because I like it myself; I do not know that it has financially done me much good; I like the country myself.

1390. But you would like as many people as possible to share your enjoyment of country life?—Yes, I should be glad to see as many men as possible on the land.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

1391. I understood you, in reply to the honourable Baronet, to say that you know of no cases where the demand for these small holdings is not able to be satisfied?—No.

1392. Therefore you see no reason for compulsory powers to acquire land?—No; quite the reverse.

1393. Then I understand you rightly to say that you know of no unsatisfied demand for small holdings?—I do not myself.

1394. But you do know of an unsatisfied demand for sites for places of worship and for houses?—No, I never said that. I believe there is an Act of Parliament by which you can acquire a site for a chapel.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1395. No?—I beg your pardon; I thought there was.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

1396. Then should you be in favour of applying the compulsory principle?—What I said was, that if land was to be taken in a village or a country parish for any purpose compulsorily, I would rather see it taken to enable the people to acquire the freehold to put a co-operative store on than for any other purpose; because then they would get more money.

1397. That is to say, that you would rather see it acquired compulsorily for the erection of a house for business purposes, or for a place of worship?—I think so; I would sell any man a piece of ground for a place of worship if he wished it.

1398. Then you have no objection to the compulsory acquisition of land on principle?—Not when Parliament is satisfied that it is the proper thing, as in the case of railways and canals; those are what I had in my mind. I was not quite sure myself about the wisdom of taking land for artizans' dwellings in the towns, but I hope it will go on well; I hope the rent will be sufficient to cover the expense.

1399. You gave us a case just now in which an application was made under the Allotments Act for some land under the board of guardians, which fell through, and was afterwards settled by private arrangement?—It was settled almost directly; we told the men that we would see them again if they found it necessary to call upon us to apply the Act; by "we," I mean the board of guardians, of which I was one; we got three or four guardians who lived nearest the parish to go over to the place and see whether an arrangement could be made by which the men could have as much land as they wanted, and I have been over myself since.

1400. But for the Allotments Act would they have got it?—Yes; they got it without our having to apply the Act.

1401. But if there had been no Act in existence do you think that they would have got the land?—Yes, I think so.

1402. Do you think that the compulsory principle in the Allotments Act at all acted on the board of guardians in causing them to come to terms? that is the point that I am driving at?—No.

1403. You do not think that it was owing in any sense to the Allotments Act, or to the compulsory sections of that Act?—It did this, it brought the matter under their notice. We sit with reporters in the room, and they may have said it is not a very pleasant thing to hear that in a parish in Northamptonshire the men cannot get as much land as they want for gardening.

1404. Then you would say that they did get

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

get it indirectly through the Allotments Act?—No, I would not say so.

1405. But if there had been no Allotments Act, do you think that they would have got that land?—I think they would; if they had come over to the board of guardians, or seen any of the persons who are guardians, and said, We wish you could do something for us to enable us to get hold of this field, I think they would have got it. Where I live there is no objection to letting for allotments.

1406. You think that they would have got it from the board of guardians; but do you think that they would have got it from a private owner?—I do not know; you may say, why did they not? I really do not know.

1407. Then it was the intervention of the board of guardians that secured that which would not have come by private arrangement?—I think it would have come by private arrangement, I was going to say that the matter came about in rather a curious way. The men had been dispossessed of their land by the Corporation of Northampton taking a great quantity of land, of which some was in allotments, for the construction of a reservoir; and I dare say they were sore when they found themselves out in the cold; and they came over and applied for other land.

1408. In regard to another point which was raised by the honourable Member for the Stamford Division of the migration of the agricultural labourers; he seemed to be under the impression that there would be migration of agricultural labourers if the small holdings system were to come into operation, that is to say, that men would be imported from without into a given parish, who would come and displace the agricultural labourers now employed, that the old inhabitants would go, and new ones take their place. That is the way I understand it; do you understand that to be the purport of his question?—I do not think that would be the case.

1409. Would it not be possible for the agricultural labourers themselves, by easy stages, to acquire small holdings?—No; I do not think that a wise labourer would attempt it. If you call enterprise a good feature in a man's character (and I think it is), the young men of the present day with whom I come in contact do not care to be confined to the land, unless they remain as shepherds or foremen, which are places of trust with high wages: their desire is to get into the town, or on the railway.

1410. You gave us a case in which a man earning 3 *s.* a day, did take a farm from you amounting to 20 acres, and tried it?—Yes.

1411. Are there many men of that class?—There are not many men of that class for prudence and ability. That man is a very skilled labourer, and knows more about cattle than most men of his class.

1412. Anyhow the nett result of small holdings would be, not to decrease the number of labourers, but to increase the number of labourers on the land, even although there might be some change in them?—It would certainly increase the number of labourers on the land.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1413. You have said, that in your experience you do not think there is a demand that cannot be satisfied on the part of those who want small holdings in the county in which you live?—By a small holding how high would you go?

1414. Up to 30 or 40 acres, for instance. I think you said that there is no difficulty in supplying any demand of that sort which existed?—Up to 30 acres there might be; and perhaps more difficulty up to 10 acres. Up to 10 acres I think the landlords would be shy of taking the men. Thirty acres is just about the amount of land that a man would think he could live on, if it were arable land. The landowners would think it better very likely, not to let him have it; but they would let him have a farm of 100 acres.

1415. You have no objection to small holdings supposing that a demand did exist in other districts?—Oh dear no; and provided, certainly, that they paid the rates, without compounding.

1416. You have no objection to the principle of small holdings?—No. I think it very material that they should pay the rates. I have some idea that I saw in the Bill a proposal that they should have the land let to them free of rates; of course it is added on to the rent; but then the man never gets taught. You may have an unsanitary state of things, costing the locality I do not know what, and the tenant is not made to smart for it, and never gets a lesson.

1417. Would you have any objection to the method of applying small holdings where they may be wanted, by the agency of the local authorities, provided that you were satisfied that there were no danger of loss to the ratepayers?—If there was no other way of doing it, and if there were no danger of loss to the ratepayers, I can see no possible objection to it; the premises being that the land is wanted, that they cannot get it in any other way, and that it is to be supplied to them on terms under which the local authority would not be the loser.

1418. Where the risk is reduced to a minimum?—Yes; in every transaction there must be some risk, of course.

1419. You spoke of a small farm of about 10 acres, I think, just now, which you had sold on the condition of a certain amount being paid down and the remainder to be paid by instalments?—Yes.

1420. What is the per-centage of the instalments?—It was 150 *l.*, I think, and 810 *l.*

Chairman.

1421. That is a little less than 20 per cent.?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1422. And what interest and sinking fund was charged on the remainder?—Four per cent.; and that will clear off the principal, and satisfy the claim for interest. That is the case of the Small Farm Labourers' Land Company.

1423. That money was to be paid in how many years?—That will take, I think, 30 years, but I am not sure. No, it could not be so many;

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

many; it is 36 *l.* 5 *s.* a year that the man pays, and he has got to clear off 660 *l.*, with the interest on that.

1424. You say that in your parish there were 17 acres of common land that had been set aside under the General Enclosure Act?—Yes; that bit of ground was all waste ground, as it is termed. There were 1,300 acres, I think, of waste land, which were the common of six parishes; this parish required one portion of it, and the Commissioners required that a certain portion of it should be set apart for allotments; and the rent-charge on it was sold.

1425. First of all to whom was that rent-charge paid?—It was paid to the wardens who are called allotment wardens; they are provided under the Act, and they collect the rent; and it is required that the rent shall all be paid in advance, and it is paid in advance.

1426. For what purposes do the allotment wardens apply the rents?—It goes to satisfy the rent-charge. I believe the proceeds of the sale of this land, or of the rent-charge, went in that case to pay the cost of the enclosure; so that really you may say that the 17 acres, or whatever it was, was taken to pay for the enclosure, but with the condition that it was for ever to be let for allotments.

1427. The rent-charge was quite a distinct matter from the charge made to the tenants?—Yes.

1428. Then what I want to get at is these two things; first of all, to whom did the rent-charge go; and, in the second place, to what purpose does the actual rent of the allottees go?—The rent of the allottees goes to meet the rent-charge.

1429. But after the rent-charge is paid what do the allotment wardens do with the surplus?—There would be the gates to keep up, and the rates and taxes to pay; and all the water is pumped out of that land. There is a heavy tax of something like 7 *s.* an acre.

1430. You stated that in your opinion there was no decrease of small cultivators caused by legislation since the Enclosure Act of 1845?—No, I think not, so far as my own knowledge goes.

1431. By legislation, I mean?—Yes, by legislation.

1432. That was the General Enclosure Act, of course?—The General Enclosure Act of 1845.

1433. Have you the same opinion with respect to the 4,000 or thereabouts of private enclosure Acts which took place up to the time of the Act of 1845, say up to the year 1844?—I do not know enough about them to say. They are all filed, of course, with the clerk of the peace, but very few people ever look at them, except when there is a sale, and the question of title comes in; I have seen two or three of the private enclosure Acts, and they vary very much; they were the result of agreements between the owners.

1434. You are not able to say whether the result of these Acts was to reduce the number of small cultivators?—I could not say.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

1435. You are aware of the Board of Agriculture which existed in the early part of this century, of which Sir John Sinclair was president?—Yes, and afterwards Mr. Arthur Young, secretary.

1436. Would you be disposed to take their evidence on that point?—I should take Mr. Arthur Young's evidence as very good; I do not know much about Sir John Sinclair's; I have never read his report.

1437. Taking your own county for example do you know the parish of Ratcliffe in Leicestershire?—Yes, I think there are two. There is Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreak; is that the one?

1438. It is the parish of Ratcliffe in Leicestershire in respect to which the Board of Agriculture states as the result of an enclosure which took place before their report, that in that parish there was a great defalcation in cheese and pigs occasioned mainly by the taking away of the land from the cottagers; then in your county of Northampton, do you know the parish of Passenham?—No, I have never been in it.

1439. The same Board of Agriculture reports that in that village of Passenham the cultivators were deprived of their cows, and were great sufferers by the loss of their hogs; and so I might go on through all the counties. The question which I wish to ask is, whether you are prepared to take the Report of the Board of Agriculture of that day as evidence of the diminution in each parish that has been enclosed, of the cultivators who previously existed?—Yes, of the occupiers.

1440. I may take as a sample of what I mean the parish of Ackworth in Yorkshire; "This parish," the Board say, "belonged to near 100 owners, nearly the whole of whom have come to the parish since the enclosure, or changed the quantity of their lands;" and I might ask you the same question with regard to almost every county from this Report of the Board of Agriculture?—I think in Ratcliffe (if that is Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreak, as I suppose it is), and in Passenham after an enclosure it would have had the effect of reducing the holdings, because undoubtedly they were open fields which were absolutely obliged to be cultivated in a particular way; fallow first, and then wheat, and then beans, and then barley, which could not be deviated from; whether corn sold well or whether it sold badly, or whether it was profitable or not, the condition could not be altered. When they enclosed them, much of those lands no doubt went down to grass; Ratcliffe did no doubt.

1441. And to that extent, seeing that that was by private Act of Parliament the effect of legislation up to the time of 1844, was to decrease the number of cultivators?—Yes; but that legislation gave effect to sound economical views; it was like the great enclosure in Henry VII.'s time. I suppose wool got up then, and grain got down, and the nation put its land to the most profitable use.

1442. There is only one point more on which I want to ask you a few questions. In the enclosure that you referred to, I think in Cambridgeshire,

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

bridgeshire, that I presume was under the General Act of 1845?—Yes, the enclosure of the parish I had in view, and also the enclosure of the inter-commonable land which came about some years afterwards.

1443. Then, according to the provisions of the Act, the Commissioners, you say, had their share of the enclosed land?—Yes, they got a piece of land in exchange for the right which they had of feeding a cow. There were very few commonable animals in that parish; a sheep was not a commonable animal, nor was a horse.

1444. May I take it that no one except the commoners, that is to say, those who had exercised the rights from time immemorial?—Those who possessed the right, that had the right.

1445. But those who did not possess the rights of common, but had restrictive rights on the common, who had exercised the rights at any rate whether legally or not, I take it had no compensation?—No, but they never were allowed to exercise the right. I have known the commoners go out and hamstring a man's animal who pleaded that he had a right on the common.

1446. But supposing that there were such a class of men they never received any compensation?—Their lives would not have been worth much if they had attempted to insist on it as a public right. I am speaking of the commoners; it is not the lord of the manor, he would not have troubled himself about it, it would have been the commoners who would have resisted such an invasion on the pasture.

1447. You said that the copyholders had also a share, I think?—If the copyholder had a right appurtenant to a copyhold house, he would get an allotment, and that would be copyhold of the manor.

1448. But if the copyholder was not a commoner, I take it that he would get nothing?—He would get nothing.

1449. So that the copyholders were, under the 16th section of the Act, deprived also of any rights of common which they had hitherto possessed?—The copyholders had no rights at all, any more or any less than those of the freeholders.

1450. Then the lord of the manor, in addition to the fifteenth part of the waste that you speak of, had also his share as a commoner?—No, the lord of the manor cannot be a commoner; that is an impossibility. If a lord of the manor buys a copyhold estate, that copyhold ceases to be a copyhold, and he loses all his rights for ever. That is how England has become freehold.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*.

1451. I understand you to say, that in your view small occupiers do not, as a rule, desire to buy their freehold estates?—Not for agricultural purposes. By agricultural purposes I am excluding fruit gardening, seed growing, and for house building, with a garden attached to it.

1452. A house and garden I know is excluded,

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

but you do call fruit gardening and seed growing agricultural puposes?—No.

1453. Then by agricultural purposes you refer simply to the growing of corn?—Corn and grass, and roots.

1454. What I understood you say was that, in your experience, small occupiers did not desire to buy land; to what parts of the country does that apply?—I am speaking of the part of the country I am acquainted with, which is Cambridge, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire.

1455. Do you not think that the difficulty you referred to of the transfer of land, and the cost of land transfer, has something to do with this unwillingness to purchase land?—No, I do not. If an estate is encumbered with charges, that has got of course to be inquired into; but I have sold little parcels of land, not, as I have already said, to agricultural labourers, but to factory owners; and I have told my friends who wished to purchase of me, you may run your expenses up to anything you like; there is my title and there is my estate; I am satisfied with the title, and my lawyer is satisfied. I have no mortgage on the land, it is mine to sell, and if you like now to purchase, you will have to pay your own law expenses and mine too. Then the law expenses have been very moderate; the stamps of course have had to be paid.

1456. But what I wanted to know was, whether the fear which everybody has of going to a lawyer and the prospect of a large bill, particularly in dealing with land, does not operate to prevent these small occupiers from purchasing land?—They may have a fear of the lawyer, and that I think would naturally operate; it is not a pleasant thing to read a lawyer's bill after you have finished the business.

1457. Then you are of course in favour of doing anything which would cheapen the transfer of land by means of the registration of title, and so forth?—I should be very glad to make the transfer of land cheaper, because it would make land worth more money directly.

1458. I will pass on now to another point; you said just now that in your view 60 acres of grass was a sufficiently large farm for one man to bring up his family upon?—To occupy the man, I said.

1459. And you said that a farm of 300 acres would occupy a man and a-half, while the master might ride about and do nothing?—I said 300 acres of grass land; it would occupy much more than a man and a-half if it was arable land.

1460. You know, of course, the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture?—Yes, I had to draw up the American part of it.

1461. Perhaps you have read Mr. Jenkins' report on the Agriculture of the Netherlands?—I have looked into the report upon Holland, I think; I forget who was the Commissioner.

1462. Mr. Jenkins?—Yes, the Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society.

1463. Did you not observe in that report that the holdings in the Netherlands, which vary from 60 to 70 or 80 acres, employed from five to seven and eight hands on each holding?—I did not notice that; but I know that they employ a very great deal more labour than we do, because the

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

uses to which the land is put are so different from what we do in England.

1464. Pardon me, we are talking of grass land?—I cannot believe that those great grass open lands that you see going up the Scheldt covered with cattle take any great amount of labour; I do not think that the Dutch or anybody else would be fools enough to put it on those lands.

1465. I will merely ask you whether the instances of the farms which Mr. Jenkins examined do not show that on farms of from 60 to 70 acres there are usually five, and, in some instances, eight and nine hands employed; you do not know that?—I have been there myself, and I know what they grow; they grow tobacco, they grow maize, and they grow a quantity of seeds, and a great many grow flower roots; that all takes labour.

1466. I am speaking of grass farms. In the instances which I refer to the land is principally grass, and the product is principally dairy produce; and it is for that reason that I ask you the question, having reference to your expression of opinion as to the number of people that would be employed on grass land in this country?—I did not know that they employed on grass land in Holland five times the number of hands that we do in England.

1467. On such a farm of 60 acres of grass land, which you say is sufficient to employ one man, would the one man suffice to attend to the liquid manuring of that farm, assuming that it is grass land, and would he also be able to attend to the making and the packing of the butter, to the carrying of the farm produce to the market, to the making of cheese, and to all the subsidiary industries connected with a small grass farm of from 50 to 60 acres?—If he began dabbling with liquid manuring he would go the way that a great many rich people have gone with it. I will venture to say that nobody has ever got anything out of liquid manure; the thing is how to get rid of it with the least possible loss; that is the question to be settled by great towns as well as by small farmers. Anybody who tries to get a profit out of liquid manure is aiming at what will never pay him. He must be humble, and try to get rid of it at the least possible loss either to the community in the case of a town or to himself in the case of a small farmer.

1468. I think you are a little wandering away from my question, which was whether with regard to the various subsidiary industries connected with a small grass dairy farm; one man is sufficient to discharge them, as you said just now?—I beg your pardon, I could not quite follow you.

1469. You said just now that on a grass farm of 60 acres one man would find employment and be able to bring up his family?—Yes.

1470. And having named a few of the subsidiary industries connected with such a grass farm, I ask whether you still state that one man is sufficient to carry them out?—Not if he is going to attempt to do all that, to pack the butter and lay out the liquid manure. I say that he would be ruined, and there would be an end of the fellow in a very short time. I do not think that any man acquainted with land would do anything so unwise as to attempt that. It has

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

all been tried in England, there is nothing new in it; I tried it when I was a young man. I used to have liquid manure carted about, and I never received any adequate benefit from it.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

1471. I should like to ask you whether you do not think that milk is an important article of diet for children?—I think it is an excellent diet for children, but I think it is too costly a diet for the labouring classes. I think they have found that out themselves; it is not my opinion alone, they would buy it and use it if it paid them.

1472. If milk can be obtained under the conditions of small holdings, so as to be cheaper than it is under the present system, in the absence of small holdings, you do not mean to say that then it would not be a useful article of diet?—But there is no proof that milk would be produced more cheaply under the system of small holdings than it can be by large holdings, by a man with 400 or 500 cows.

1473. Supposing that we had small occupations like there are on Lord Tollemache's property in Cheshire, where the men keep cows, where every house nearly has a cow, that you think would be an advantage to the growing generation of agricultural labourers, or small holders in that district?—Anything that brought the price of milk down to the children would probably be an advantage to them; they would consume it more than they do now.

1474. What would be the advantage?—Well, I am very fond of milk myself but a good many labourers will not touch it.

1475. You left an impression on the minds of some of the Committee, I think, that milk was not a necessary article of diet, or a very useful article, and you said that bread and beer were, you thought, equally good?—That was not my opinion, but the opinion of the people. In the Library of the House of Commons you will find some evidence of mine given nearly 30 years ago upon that subject, in which I gave actually the cost of living to the labouring classes. I remember perfectly taking the case of a woman who brought up some wonderfully fine children, and she used to give them only half a tea cup full of beer, with bread, for their supper; no doubt that was the cheapest supper they could have.

1476. You are quite aware, of course, that children could not be brought up on bread and beer alone?—The cheapest food, they tell me, for rearing children is Swiss milk and maize; it is better for the children, I am told, than milk straight from the cow.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

1477. You were speaking about the prevalence of the desire among the labourers to go into the towns; do you think that that is from a mere love of change, or for the purpose of bettering themselves?—I think it is partly due to the fact that the young men think it is a freer life; they are not brought under the observation so closely of what they call their betters, for one reason. Then there is more enjoyment; there is the foot-racing and bicycling, all of which these young fellows go into now, and there are the evening amusements, and there are better wages; whether

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

whether they save upon it so well is another thing. But I believe that in some cases, so far as income goes, the best thing that could happen to an agricultural labourer would be to lose his land, because he would have to give up the working on the land, and if he had good friends to help him on into a factory where the land is not wanted, he would command better money. I know myself two instances of lads who were injured by machinery; in both those cases we placed the young fellows in Northampton, and immediately they got their limbs sound they got more money. In another respect I like to see the people on the land, and wish they would remain there; but we are talking here of money.

1478. I understand you to be very strongly in favour of the agricultural life?—Yes, I am myself.

1479. And you would desire to retain the people on the land?—Yes.

1480. Do you think that it would be good policy, I mean from a national point of view, to adopt measures so long as they are wisely conceived, to offer inducements to the more interprising young men to remain on the land?—No, I do not; because I do not think that any direct effort to assist the working classes has ever turned out well. All the great benefits which the working classes have obtained from legislation have come, latterly, incidentally. I am not a God Almighty, and I dare not say what is best for the people. I would give them freedom, and give them every opportunity of removing every obstacle to their advantage and improvement, and then let them work out their own salvation; but I would not legislate to give them allotments or to give them anything that appears to be directly to their advantage, because it may not turn out to be so. But there are obstacles to their getting on, which do not stand in the way of well-to-do people, which I should like to see removed.

1481. That would be mainly the desire and opinion of most people, I apprehend?—I think it would.

1482. What do you consider to be the great obstacle to getting on; the difficulty of obtaining holdings?—No, I think they could do that, specially in an open parish. I do not think there is much fear in an open parish of their not doing so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

1483. I understood you to say that you did not quite believe in the advantage of small holdings in producing eggs, butter, milk, and things of that kind; do you seriously think that the eggs which are produced by small holders are inferior to the eggs produced by large holders?—I do not think about it, I am quite sure of it. Poultry want a great range, and if you are to have a great range the larger holder has the advantage.

1484. Are large farmers in the habit of raising eggs for sale?—Not in the nature of a business.

1485. Are they not too proud, and are not their wives too much given to playing the piano?—Poultry farming is a very troublesome thing.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

I, myself, send a very great many up to London; but it is a business which is kept separate.

1486. You also expressed an opinion that the advantage which foreigners have in the way of supplying eggs to the English market is very much a matter of climate; would you be surprised to learn that from the Orkney Islands, in the North Sea, there is an immense exportation of eggs?—Of poultry eggs? I should be very much surprised to learn it. I should have thought it was too cold for them.

1487. Then as regards butter, do the large farmers raise butter very much for market?—I do not know; I think that there is every desire to sell the dairy produce in milk, rather than to sell it off in butter.

1488. Do you not think that the inferior quality of English butter is on account of the neglect of the English farmers to make good butter, and has a good deal to do with the importation of Normandy and other butter?—I do not know, I am sure. I tasted no good butter in Italy. I have been there for eight or nine weeks, and I never tasted a bit of butter that was fit to eat; I think it was mostly butterine.

1489. Is not the Normandy butter superior to the English Dorset butter?—I have not been in Normandy for a very long time, but I should not take it for granted that everything in London which is stamped Normandy butter is Normandy butter.

1490. Then, as regards milk, you say that the farmers find it more profitable to sell their milk; but did you not also tell us that the large farmers will not sell milk, and are there not many districts in which there is a great difficulty in getting milk because the large farmers will not sell it?—I do not believe that there is that demand for milk among the labouring classes which the people outside an acquaintance with them think that there is; I will answer the question categorically. I, like many Members of the Committee, was anxious to let the people have an opportunity of having milk; I would not retail it, but I told our industrial societies to give an order for what they wanted every week; it ended in about one gallon a week being ordered, which goes up to the Industrial Societies' Stores, and that I am told goes up on Friday, and is used for making the pudding on Sunday.

1491. Did you not tell us of a lady of your acquaintance who found when she took it round to the doors that she made a good thing of it, showing that there was a demand for it?—But she takes the milk round in a factory village.

1492. Then you have told us that Swiss milk is the cheapest thing for rearing children; do not you think that if small farmers cultivated milk successfully in England fresh milk might be better for the children than preserved Swiss milk?—But the manufacture of condensed milk is one of the most delicate operations that can be performed; a farmer could not anyhow undertake the manufacture of condensed milk.

1493. I think you mistake me; my question was whether it would not be better if small farmers could successfully raise and sell fresh milk instead of leaving the people to buy Swiss milk for their children?—The farmers in England are sending a good deal of milk into the condensed

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

condensed milk factories; there is a large factory down by Swindon and another has recently been started by Colchester for the manufacture of condensed milk; they are not sending it round as fresh milk, but for the conversion of it into condensed milk.

1494. There is only one other question that I wish to ask you; apart from small farms, as regards small holdings less than farms, do you not think that something has been done, and that a great deal more might with advantage be done, in the way of turning these small holdings into strawberry beds and fruit orchards?—There are very few places where the strawberry grows well; in a parish which I have been talking of, in answer to questions put by the Chairman, we could not anyhow grow strawberries; we could grow black currants, but we could not grow a raspberry for sale; I think if the honourable Member looks over the fields when he is travelling on the railway he will see some that will grow cowslips and nothing else, and some that will not grow primroses, and the same law of nature governs the land with regard to fruit and crops.

1495. Is there not an increasing demand for cowslips, and also for roses and other flowers that come from abroad?—It is no use to grow cowslips on land which is not fit for it. I know one small cultivator (and it may be interesting to the Committee to hear this) who has two acres of land, and who cultivates it entirely with violets. And what becomes of the violets? They are not put in our button-holes, but they go to Paris for preserving; but if another man tried it in an adjoining parish he would make nothing of it; this man is a very clever fellow, and he has found out that sugared violets are a valuable article, and he sends this crop over to Paris.

1496. You told us that English bacon was coming to be preferred to American bacon; are not pigs specially fitted for small cultivators?—Yes, undoubtedly; and in the case of the labourer it is a great pleasure to him.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

1497. You are generally favourable, I understand, to small holdings; you are not unfavourable to them?—Not at all.

1498. And you think that socially they would undoubtedly be advantageous?—Yes; and I think that they have been advantageous to the landowners.

1499. And you would like to see them encouraged?—That is another thing. As I said just now, I am not an advocate for the direct encouragement of any scheme. If there is anything standing in the way of people getting small holdings I would remove it.

1500. What I mean is this: I rather gathered from what I heard that you would be glad to see them increased in number, and encouraged by the removal of any obstacles that stand in the way?—Yes.

1501. But you would take no direct measures to accomplish that end?—No, I should not myself.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1502. Do you think that there would be a fair prospect of their being economically successful if the number of small holdings were increased?—If the quantity of good land in England were increased. I think that if small holdings, and cultivating by the spade is encouraged, it should be upon very good land, and, if possible, with a good climate. In the Eastern Counties you have a continental climate, with something like four or five inches less of rain than falls in the Midlands, and that makes all the difference with small holdings or large holdings, or fruit or grain.

1503. Is this what I understand you to say then, that in order that small holdings should be successful it would be very desirable that they should be limited more or less to good land?—Yes; I do not think that anything could be done by small holdings on bad land; and I think that it would be very distressing to see the consequences.

1504. I suppose that we may say, roughly speaking, that the different classes of agricultural holdings would be divided as follows: into large tenancies, into small tenancies, and into small freeholds; would you agree to that?—By large tenancies you mean to say a 2,000-acre man, a 1,000-acre man, and so on; then the small tenancies would be 50 or 60 acres.

1505. Yes?—I should think it comes down in very regular gradation from 1,000 to 500, 300, and stops at about 60 acres.

1506. What I mean is this; would not those be a fair general description of agricultural holdings throughout England. You might say that there are large tenancies, small tenancies, and small freeholds; those are the three separate classes of holdings?—I have never gone into that question, and I could not say.

1507. I want to ask, as the next question, which of those three classes of holdings, according to your opinion, have weathered the period of agricultural depression best through which we have passed?—My own opinion is the small occupier, that is to say, the 100-acre man.

1508. The small tenant, that is to say?—Yes; he has been less troublesome to the landlord than the very large one.

1509. Then the small tenant has weathered the period best?—Yes; I think he has stood it best.

1510. Which of the other two classes has been second best, the large tenant or the small freeholder; which has passed through the period of depression with the least suffering to himself?—I have no experience of the small freeholder out of this good land which I have been talking of in Cambridgeshire, and he stood it very well. In fact that sort of produce has not come down; bad times have not altered the value of good common fruit.

1511. What I gather from you then is this: that in your own county, of which you are able to speak, and where the freeholder has had good land, the small freeholder has suffered less than the large tenant?—Yes, undoubtedly; the large tenant depending on wheat and grain has been nowhere.

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Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (a Member of the Committee); further Examined.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

1512. IN answer to Question 25, in reference to the replacing of the number of freeholders, you say, "There are no artificial means and no natural means of replacing these small freeholders"?—Yes.

1513. You did not mean by that to imply that there were no artificial obstacles, did you?—No; I meant by that to state what I have illustrated by my evidence later; that the class of men who would naturally supply the vacancies in small cultivation had been extinguished, squeezed out of existence, by the enclosures which have taken place mainly in the latter part of the last century and the first part of the present century.

1514. Have they not also been squeezed out of existence by the fact that landowners have invested their savings largely in buying up these small freeholds?—That is the process of consolidation to which I have also alluded.

1515. And you regard that as one of the artificial means by which they have been diminished?—No, I should not call that an artificial means; a landlord has the right to buy up what land he chooses. But what I have complained of is, that by these numerous private Acts of Parliament, which are numbered by the thousand, they extinguish the rights of small cultivators, and destroy the class who are the natural people to supply small cultivators at all times.

1516. Has not the existing condition of the law also acted in this way: that these small freeholders being extinguished either by purchase or by enclosure, the tendency has been for that property not to be distributed again?—Undoubtedly the tendency has been to the consolidation of property.

1517. And the state of the law has not allowed the natural distribution?—That opens up the question of entail and perpetuities which prevent land from coming into the market.

1518. And you admit that that is one of the great causes?—The land being tied up of course is a great reason why it is not in the market.

1519. But you did not refer to that directly in your evidence; I only wanted you to express an opinion?—I think that the law of entail and settlement is one of the great barriers to the spontaneous creation of a peasant proprietary.

1520. And you are aware that in other countries where no such law exists, in America, for example, the modern tendency has been to diminution in the size of farms?—Yes; but I am also aware that in such a country as Denmark, where not only entail of a certain number of lives as we have here, but perpetual entail is allowed, there are also small holdings and small proprietors.

1521. Are they increasing in number?—I should think yes.

1522. In spite of the existence of this law?—In spite of the existence of the power. To what extent it is exercised in Denmark I do not know; but I am advocating the doing away with entail and settlement.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

1523. You are advocating freedom?—Yes.

1524. You also referred to Dodford; may I ask when you last visited Dodford?—My last visit was a few years ago.

1525. Can you tell me how many of the original settlers were left in Dodford then?—At that time I took some pains to find the exact number of original settlers or their immediate descendants, and I found there were 17.

1526. Out of an original number of how many?—Somewhere between 40 and 50.

1527. Have not some of those Dodford holdings been used for fruit growing?—They have been very largely used in strawberry growing. I might say that when this Dodford Estate was first occupied, about 45 years ago, the men had a very hard time of it; but one of them a Scotchman, tried a few strawberry plants, and, it being a heavy clay land, the strawberries took to it well; and since then you will find that nearly all of them grow from a quarter of an acre to two acres out of their four acres with strawberries, and they have done comparatively well since then.

1528. That becomes a very large source of their profits?—Yes.

1529. And you regard fruit growing as one of the most important directions for the profitable use of small holdings?—Yes, certainly.

1530. Then with reference to small holdings, do you know anything about the small holdings of Ireland?—They have got too many of them I should think in Ireland.

1531. Can we have too much of a good thing?—That depends upon what you mean by small holdings.

1532. Small tenancies of seven to 15 or 20 acres?—There are a large number of them.

1533. Do you know whether they have been worked profitably?—I believe that there are 200,000 out of the 600,000 that are rated at 4 *l.* per annum and under.

1534. Have you any personal experience of them?—Yes, I have been over them several times.

1535. Are a great many of them cultivated as arable land to a large extent?—It is a very difficult position for a cultivator of a small holding of that description if he attempts to live on it; it is almost an impossibility.

1536. In what does the difficulty consist?—The difficulty seems to me apparent if a man attempts with his family to live upon a couple of acres, we will say, of poor land.

1537. I was speaking of larger holdings than that; I was speaking of from seven to 15 acres?—I have no doubt that the Irish cultivator would do very well on 15 to 30 acres of decent land.

1538. Or even less; have you not known instances of even less than that?—I do not remember personally, but I have no doubt that such is the case.

1539. The difficulties to which you were referring in connection with those holdings would

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

be rather in reference to small holdings of two acres and so on, would they not?—The difficulties of Irish holdings to which I refer were those of the class you spoke of as being rated at 4 *l.* and under, which may be a couple of acres of bad land. I should think that the difficulties were enormous, even if there were no rent paid at all, for a man and his wife to live on the land in those cases.

1540. But 4 *l.* would be a very high rent for two acres of land?—I think the honourable Member mistook me; I said that there were so many, almost a third, of the holdings of Ireland that were rated at 4 *l.* and under, some of them very much under.

1541. With reference to the occupation of land which is charity land, or public land in that sense, being taken for small holdings, a good deal of that land now comes under the Allotments Act of 1882 and the Allotments Act of 1887, does it not?—Yes.

1542. Are you not jealous of any occupation of that land, which is more or less selected for the application of these two Allotment Acts, being used for small holdings?—No, I would certainly not interfere with the supply of allotments for the sake of small holdings. My remark was that, after allotments had been supplied, the charity lands might be bought by the local authorities for the purpose of small holdings.

1543. But only after the desire, the hunger, for allotments has been completely satisfied?—Yes.

1544. You would not suggest that it should be taken before that?—No.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

1545. Might I ask you to explain to the Committee your views with regard to the advantages of your scheme in relation to the mode of payment; I mean with regard to the proportion which you think it is desirable should be paid down; I want to ask you what advantages you think would accrue from that arrangement?—The advantage of paying only a fourth of the purchase-money down, instead of paying the whole of it, is, first of all, that it allows the purchaser to retain his capital for working and stocking his land, which I regard as very important, especially with the poorer class of cultivator whom we are considering.

1546. Would you kindly explain the objection that you have to allowing the holder (or whatever you call him) to pay off the rest?—I call him a freeholder subject to a quit-rent. I have mentioned several advantages. One is, that conditions can be imposed to prevent sub-division and sub-letting; another is, that he offers no temptation to the money-lender, even if he wants to borrow money, which he is not so likely to do, seeing that he has not had to impoverish himself by providing the whole of the purchase-money. But the chief advantage, at least a great advantage, and one that concerns the ratepayer, is that by the plan which I propose, he should pay a little more interest to the local authority than the local authority pays to the State, and which thereby ultimately works to the advantage of the ratepayers.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

1547. You think that it would not be advisable to allow a man, provided he came into money unexpectedly after he took the holding, to pay the debt clean off and become a freeholder?—No, for the reason which I have stated, namely, that seeing that the interest he pays would be very small, 4 per cent., it is not necessary.

1548. I suppose you have made some calculation of what per cent. the local authority will have to charge with regard, in the first place, to borrowing; at what price do you think that the local authority would be able to borrow for repayment, say, in 50 years?—For the purpose of my explanation I presume that they would borrow from the State at 3 per cent. and charge the purchaser 4 per cent. My own opinion is that such local authorities as county councils, for example, would borrow at less than 3 per cent.

1549. Are you aware that at the present time the Public Works Loan Commissioners will lend money at this rate: 100 *l.* to be repaid, with interest, in 50 years at 4 *l.* 13 *s.* 1½ *d.* per cent. per annum; that is to cover the interest and repayment in 50 years?—I take your statement.

1550. I have got it from the Local Government Board three days ago?—That is not a very low rate of interest.

1551. Certainly not. In addition to that by your scheme you have to add 1 per cent. for the security of the local authority?—Yes.

1552. Supposing that a piece of land cost 100 *l.* an acre, the local authority would therefore have to charge 5 *l.* 13 *s.* and some odd pence per acre to the tenant?—I do not accept the assumption that the local authorities are going to pay something like 4½th per cent., exclusive of the sinking fund, or anything like that. A local authority like a county council, or the Corporation of Birmingham, can do far better than that in the open market.

1553. Do you imagine that the local authorities will be able to borrow money upon a term of repayment by instalments at 3 per cent.?—I am not prepared to say that.

1554. Surely that is rather an important item in the scheme, that of being able to calculate upon what rate they will have to borrow?—If you ask me whether in the event of Parliament passing a scheme of this sort they will not allow the local authorities to borrow at less than those terms, I should say that I have no doubt that the local authorities will be able to borrow at 3 per cent. or less as the interest; then the sinking fund would depend of course upon the amount of time in which they have to pay it off.

1555. But do you think it likely that the local authorities, if they had the opportunity, would be able to borrow at a less price from private individuals than they can from the Public Works Loan Commissioners?—Certainly at less than the terms you have named.

1556. Are you not aware that local authorities do not, as a rule, like to extend the repayment for such a long time as 50 years?—I was chairman of a committee when a local authority borrowed money to be repaid in 100 years.

1557. That

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

1557. That was probably in the case of a big town?—It was the town of Birmingham.

1558. Upon what security was that?—Upon the ordinary security of the rates.

1559. I am speaking of country districts. Do you imagine that private individuals would lend money for repayment in instalments, say in 30 years (I do not think that many care to borrow for a longer period than that), for less interest from private individuals?—I think it would be difficult to borrow money for repayment by instalments extending over a number of years, probably, from any private source.

1560. Therefore they would be thrown very much upon the Public Works Loan Commissioners?—They would be thrown on the Government.

1561. And they would have to reduce the charge considerably below their present charge before you would think that it could pay the local authorities to borrow money from them, and to let the land at such a price that the agricultural labourer could make a profit of it?—Yes.

1562-3. Then something would have to be done with regard to lowering the rate of interest on borrowed money?—Certainly. I can see no reason why the State should charge 4 per cent. to a local authority for the purposes of carrying out this Act.

1564. I should like to ask you a question with regard to your views of the power of an individual to dispose of his land after he has once become a freehold tenant under your scheme?—He can sell it by auction or devise it by will to one person, but always to a cultivating owner.

1565. What is your definition of a cultivating owner?—A man who occupies and cultivates the land.

1566. Could he sell or devise it to another man holding land adjoining him on the same term as himself, for instance; suppose that a man wishes to dispose of his land, would you allow him to dispose of it to a man occupying the next 100 acres?—That is a question for the local authority to determine. I should have no objection to his doing so, providing that the man was a cultivating owner.

1567. And then, in turn, that second man could do the same thing to a third?—Yes; but the local authority would make such regulations as to prevent the danger of the consolidation of farms.

1568. Might I ask you what safeguards you would propose for the benefit of a local authority in cases where they have unfortunately secured a bad tenant?—I think that the security offered under the scheme is excessive. First of all, there is the 25 per cent. of the purchase-money; and then the loan, or at least the advance, is a first charge upon the land; and I think that that in itself is a sufficient security; but, added to that, there is the increased value of the land which small cultivating ownership almost invariably gives; and there would be any improvements from year to year which might be made on the land.

1569. I should like to ask you about those improvements later on; but in case of a man becoming a bad tenant and beggaring the ground, what power would you give to the local authority to prevent him doing that, and to compel him to give up the farm?—That is a question of regulation, really. I do not anticipate that the local authority would interfere with the man's cultivation at all.

1570. But supposing that he was ruining the land, as unfortunately we know is done by a man taking it without having the capital, or from misfortune?—We often see a yearly tenant ruining the land; but I think it is a case so rare that it is not to be taken into consideration, where a man who owns the land ruins it. If from circumstances he felt obliged to neglect it, an owner would sell it and get rid of it, rather than ruin it.

1571. But supposing that the land had gone back, if it was not properly attended to, would he not have some difficulty in finding a purchaser?—He would not have much difficulty in finding a purchaser, but whether he could make a good price is another matter.

1572. Do you not think that it is possible that, in the event of his not finding a ready purchaser, the local authority would have to take to it themselves?—That is a possibility. There is no scheme that can be devised that is without a risk of some sort.

1573. You have nothing to put before the Committee as your idea of what safeguard you could give to the local authority in that case?—I do not think that the danger is worth considering, it is so remote; and seeing that you can have no scheme with respect to which there is not some possible risk, I think that the danger is a very remote one.

1574. But that risk, or rather should the land be thrown upon their hands again, that would fall upon the ratepayers of the county in the shape of an additional rate?—On the presumption that they could not sell the land for the three-fourths of its purchase value, the difference would fall on the rates.

1575. I am supposing the case of land in the village which has gone back in value, and not increased; that some manufacture has been removed, or some works stopped for various reasons, and that the land is not required; I want to ask you whether you have made any calculation of the effect of that upon the rates; how would the local authority meet such a case as having two or three holdings of 20 acres a-piece thrown upon their hands?—There might be such risks; the scheme might be liable to such contingencies; but again I think that they are so remote as not to be worth taking into consideration; because men will not go and put down 100 *l.* as part of the purchase money for a holding worth 400 *l.*, unless they see that they see their way, or are tolerably certain to succeed in it.

1576. In part of your evidence you stated that the local authority were entitled to the benefit of the increased value of the land apart from its increased value by means of the labour of the man; but in the case of its going back in value, how do you propose to deal with it?—Pardon me, all the increased value that resulted from improvements that were the result of the purchaser's capital and industry, and everything connected with himself, I propose should belong to him; it is only in certain cases where the land

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

is improved in value from outside causes (I instanced if it was wanted for a railway or for a cemetery, or anything of that sort), that then the local authority should have power to repurchase the land.

1577. Now, with regard to the small holders of to-day, can you tell me what proportion, in your opinion, are occupying land as their own holdings; what proportion of those who are freeholders are working upon their own money, and what proportion are working upon borrowed money?—I cannot tell you that.

1578. Should I be right in imagining that at least half have money upon their land as it is called?—Do you mean mortgage?

1579. Yes?—Of the small freehold?

1580. Yes?—I think it is very probable, purchasing as he had to do, and as the evidence of the Royal Commission of 1882 shows, that he purchased at high prices with borrowed money.

1581. What do they pay as a rule?—I do not know.

1582. From whom do they borrow money?—With regard to the Isle of Oxholme, it is certainly borrowed frequently from lawyers; but I only go by the Report of the Royal Commission of 1882.

1583. But from your own experience you have probably formed an opinion of what they had to pay to those lawyers?—No, I do not know what they paid; I have no doubt that they paid a higher rate than that which we are considering, which they would be required to pay to the local authority.

1584. And it is rather hard upon the landowners in having to pay up their money to the day?—A man who has his land mortgaged is always in a difficulty. As a rule, a small owner who mortgages his land gets into difficulties from which he hardly ever escapes.

1585. Then you think that the position of those men occupying under the local authority would be better?—Certainly, because there is no power to foreclose, and there is no power to raise the interest; we have called it a mortgage, but it would really be a quit rent.

1586. There would be no power to the local authority to postpone the rent day or anything of that sort, would there?—There would be no rent. We have called it rent for the purpose of discussion, but it would be interest on the balance of the purchase money.

1587. But the interest must be paid in the case of the local authority to the day?—That would depend on the local authority, of course, on any regulations which they might make as to the times of payment.

1588. I think that you will agree with me that a man who is placed in that position is at a great disadvantage compared with the man renting off a landlord?—If you take the balance of advantages and disadvantages, as I have already said, the advantages are altogether in favour of the owner, as compared with the tenant.

1589. I think you are aware that a great number of those who are small holders say, of 10 or 15 acres, are in many cases able to work out their rent in the way of lending a horse for carrying or doing an odd day's labour?—That would be quite open to the small holders whom I propose, not working for the local authority, but for other persons. I can give an instance in Worcestershire, where a gentleman whom I know employs the son of a small holder for one day a week, and pays him 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a day; it is a high price, but he told me that the man was worth it. And that proceeding would be open to the small holder under the scheme proposed by the Bill.

1590. Have you amongst those many valuable and interesting papers which you have given us any balance sheet given you by a small holder, say, in a dairy country, of how he makes his living on a small farm of, say 20 acres?—No; but I have the balance sheet (it is a curious coincidence) of a small dairy farm in the honourable Member's own county, dating back to the first decade in the present century, on a farm of 20 cows and with cheese at 2 *l.* 10 *s.* per cwt.

1591. What is the price now?—It is very much higher than 2 *l.* 10 *s.*; but I can give the balance sheet complete, which shows a profit to the man of 63 *l.*

1592. Upon what acreage is that?—It is 60 acres of dairy farm. After charging himself, debiting the account with part of his own labour, he makes a fair profit of 63 *l.*; and the rent was 30 *s.* per acre, which is not low. I can give you the balance sheet complete.

1593. I do not know that it would be of the very greatest value considering the time at which it was taken; but in the present day I want to ask you a question, as to what is the smallest holding upon which you think a man can live, with his family, apart from any other employment?—That depends altogether on circumstances; but if you take a fair quality of land, arable and grass, I should think that a man and his family could do well upon 25 acres of land.

1594. I should like very much, if it is not troubling you and the Committee, if you can work out, under very few headings indeed, the method in which that man is going to make his living. I wish to direct my question to this point, to a case where a man may take a small holding in a place where there are no special facilities for selling his produce, that is to say, that he does not live near a railway or close to a town, but 12 miles say from a town and three miles from a railway, which is a very common case?—I am not proposing that: my proposal is not to force small holdings on everybody everywhere, but to give facilities for providing them where a demand exists; and if there is no demand, or men think that they do not want them, the proposal drops. The nearest approach to the position you indicate is Lambourne, in Berkshire, which is many miles from a town and from a station, and about which I believe you are to have some evidence.

1595. With regard to the evidence of Mr. Pell, from your experience do you agree with him as to the views of the labouring classes, with regard to the advantage of having cows and milk?—It is in direct opposition to my experience; but I am bound to admit that the deprivation of milk has gone on for so long a time that

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

that the taste for milk is in many places going out. For instance, I was in a cottage in Worcestershire last year where I found a cottage woman weaning her child, which was about two or three months old, on bread and water and sugar because she could not get any milk, that is to say, she on Sundays or special days could get a spare penny or halfpenny worth.

1596. I think it is your experience, is it not, that in most villages there is some small farmer who lives by selling milk?—It is not general; often the villages where most cows are kept by the large farmers, are the villages where milk is most scarce, the farmer does not like a source of milk supply; as long as he knows that there is none he thinks himself pretty safe with regard to his own cows.

1597. But are you not aware that a very fair living can be made by a small holder of 25 acres by the sale of milk in such places as you speak of where milk is not obtainable from farmers?—I should think so.

1598. But not a living for more than one in a parish of about 500 or 600 people?—It depends upon the situation; there might be a town near.

1599. I am speaking of a village apart from a town?—There may be other villages near, or there may be a large number of roadside houses in certain places.

1600. Therefore, you would be very much in favour of every facility being given for the formation of small holdings if for no other purpose, for the purpose of supplying milk?—Yes, but I speak generally; and I would leave the demand to the general body of labourers and others. I merely want to give them facilities, and it is for them to say whether or not for any purpose they can avail themselves of these facilities.

1601. Should you be in favour, if you were advising a local authority, of buying a small property of 25 or 50 acres, if you saw the opportunity, as against buying a larger property and cutting it up?—That depends on the price; if I were a member of a local authority I should not buy a small holding to dispossess the sitting tenant or the present small holder; but if there were a small holding in the market and it could be bought at a price that was suitable, I should be for buying it.

1602. Even if it were a single one?—Yes.

1603. You would not confine your operations simply to buying a large property and cutting it up into small holdings?—No; I should municipalise, so to speak, as much land as could be safely done; I should make the extent to which the land was acquired keep pace with the demand.

1604. But you would not object to buying in the case of a small holding being vacant, say of 25 to 50 acres; you would not be indisposed to try to induce the local authority to buy it?—Not if the price were suitable.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

1605. I find from these statistics which are before us that in England half of the occupiers are small farmers, farming between five and 100 acres, and that in Wales they constitute two-thirds of the number of occupiers; what I want

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

to know is whether there is anything to be done in the way of improving or making more secure the position of that vast body of men?—I should say that turning them into freeholders is the only way of making them secure; there is no real security but ownership; if you give any security which leaves the landlord power over the rent that power will carry everything ultimately.

1606. But supposing that the landowners do not wish to sell these small holdings, is there anything to be done to improve their condition?—That opens up the question of compensation, such as the Agricultural Holdings Bill or improvements on that Bill.

1607. You would do everything that you could, of course, to secure the position of these 240,000 men?—Yes, certainly.

1608. Supposing that there is an estate or a part of an estate in the market in any part of England or Wales where there are a large number of small holders, would you give any advantage in that case to the sitting tenants over and above any other competitors for the estate or for separate farms?—I think that care should be exercised, lest by open competition an outsider might come in and purchase what really belonged to the sitting tenant.

1609. Is not that what happens at every sale of land at the present day?—I am afraid that it happens very often.

1610. Is it not the case that where a tenant is very desirous or is fairly desirous of obtaining the freehold of his home and farm, he has to buy up his own improvements?—I am afraid that is the case to a large extent.

1611. If that is so, do not you think that the sitting tenant has some claim over and above the other competitors for those farms and for that estate?—Yes, and I take it that in a case of valuation, supposing that this Bill applied to the sitting tenants, as I hope it will, then these considerations would be taken into account.

1612. Would you give, under this Bill, or under some similar Bill dealing with this question, the right of pre-emption to the sitting tenant?—It would be fair to do so.

1613. Supposing that the selling landowner and the sitting tenant failed to agree as to the purchase, would you then give power to the sitting tenant to appeal to the local authority to value the farm?—That is a question of machinery which would have to be attached to any great scheme, and which I do not feel myself competent to go into in detail, further than to say that the tenant's rights should certainly be protected.

1614. Under your scheme you give power for the cultivator to sell or devise his holding?—Yes.

1615. In the case of sale, would you not then create the same difficulty that exists now with regard to peasant proprietors; that the man who buys the farm, the holding, is ready at that time to give an extravagant price, too great a price really for him to be able to pay immediately, and that he would encumber himself and make it difficult for him to carry on his farm, and in the end bring discredit upon your scheme?—That must be left; the man who wants to sell

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

his holding, of course must make the best price for it, and if a man gives too high a price he must be subject to the consequences of his own imprudence; you cannot provide against that.

1616. Would you not rather give to the local authority the power to value the improvements which he had made during his tenancy?—No, if his rent, as a tenant, is to be increased thereby. I want to save a man from any prospect of assessment as to the rent-value of his farm, lest he should be inclined not to do the best by it.

1617. I have a very few questions which I wish to put to you with regard to some other general matter to which you referred; you have given us much information with regard to inclosure; was there, and is there still much opposition to inclosure and much bad feeling in country places with regard to lands that have been inclosed?—Yes. The whole domestic history of England, you may go back for two or three centuries, has been one struggle between the peasantry of the country and the lords of the manor; in other words it has been a struggle between severalty and commonalty. Nearly all the peasant insurrections that have taken place in various counties have been caused by these inclosures; that celebrated one of Robert Kett in Norfolk, who had 20,000 followers and defeated the King's troops, was dire ctly the result of the inclosure of lands. And then we have the protest of the most eminent Divines; we have the celebrated sermon on the plough preached before King Edward VI. by Bishop Latimer, in which he told the King that English yeomanry, as he termed them, were turned into dowerless slaves by the practice of inclosure and consolidation, and described his father's farm some years before on which were kept 20 milk cows and six husbandmen, and for which his father paid 4 *l.* per annum. And you can come down almost to the present time; whether it is the historian or the preacher, or the popular pamphlet writer, or the records of trials, it is one whole contest and struggle on the part of the peasantry to retain their lands against encroachments and inclosures.

1618. Do you know of cases within living memory where the police have been used to beat down the opposition to inclosures?—No. I have known cases where poor men and men in a small way of business have over and over again taken down inclosures, but they have been beaten at last, and the inclosures have remained; the law of inclosure is that if a lord incloses the whole of a common, the commoners have a right to go through it making as little damage as possible; but that if he incloses a part of it the remedy is at law and the poor people have no power of availing themselves of that.

1619. Under the Inclosure Acts what is the general proportion of actual common land left for the whole use of the commoners, as compared with the whole of the land inclosed?—If you mean the about 4,000 Private Inclosure Acts, which affected 7,000,000 acres of property before the Act of 1845, it is almost impossible to say, because it varies in the different Acts; but there was very little set aside for the commoners, and none for those men who had been using it with perhaps not strict

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

common rights, but a prescriptive right. Upon that point I might illustrate the question which you ask by an extract, for which I am indebted to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, with regard to Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire, where there were 2,000 acres of ground owned by the parish. This is from a petition to Parliament from the people of that borough; this petition, headed by the Mayor, sets forth that the Lord of the Manor had destroyed their ancient rights, as it was termed, and had taken away all their rights of pasture; he had got hold of their commons, and did by prescription begin suits-in-law with the said free tenants for their common, and that vexed them with so many suits-in-law for the space of seven or eight years, at the least, until they were worn out; that there was one John Rosier, for instance, one of the free tenants, who was enforced to sell all his land to the value of 500 *l.* with following the suits-in-law; and many others were thereby impoverished; that the Mayor and free tenants have lost their rights of common, and this Lord of the Manor, his heirs and assignees, now detaineth it. It winds up with about three or four lines, which, I think, might be taken as a full answer to the honourable Member's question. This is the end of the petition to Parliament "And as for our common, we do verily believe that no corporation in England is so much wronged as we are, for we are put out of all common that ever we had, and hath not so much as one foot of common left unto us, nor never shall have any; we are thereby grown so in poverty, unless it please God to move the hearts of this Honourable House to commiserate our cause, and to enact something for us, that we may enjoy our rights again." That might be taken as a type of the proceedings that have gone on for so many years, and under which the commoners have been squeezed out of existence.

1620. Were those people vexed in those cases by the lords of the manor?—In that case it was the Lord of the Manor who did it.

1621. Has the exercise of manorial rights prejudiced the case of these freeholders and small owners throughout the country, generally?—Certainly; as I stated, the amount of inclosure under the Inclosure Acts which have been quoted before the Committee by the honourable Member for Sleaford, since the Act of 1845, after all only affects about half-a-million acres at the outside; but the principal damage was done before by private Acts, under which 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 acres have been inclosed, not reckoning those which were done without Acts of Parliament, and under the Statute of Merton. I might say that in Edward the Sixth's time there was a special prayer for landowners inserted in the Primer, the authorised version of the Prayer Book, touching on that subject; it is an interesting incident in our inquiry; it was a most reverent and pious composition, praying that they, the landlords, would remember that they themselves were tenants; that they would not rack and stretch out the rents, not add field to field, and leave no place for others, but that they would be merciful in not exacting undue fines, and so forth; I cannot find it in any later version than that of 1552.

1622. You

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

1622. You said, in reply to Question 60, that in your opinion you would prevent small holders from having the power of mortgaging their land; may I ask you why you would do so; is it not desirable that the small holder should be able to mortgage his land so as to be able to obtain money to put up buildings and make improvements?—With regard to putting up buildings the Bill provides that there should be money advanced for that particular purpose.

1623. I was asking you generally, whether you do not consider that it is advisable that a small holder should be able to raise money upon mortgage at a reasonable rate of interest?—It is to do away with the necessity of his requiring to mortgage to raise money that I make the proposition that three-fourths of the purchase-money shall for ever remain unpaid.

1624. But according to your proposal the man would have to pay 4 or 4½ per cent., whereas if he was a private gentleman he could get money at 3 or 3½ per cent. It is a puzzle to me to know where the advantage is; I do not want to go into it; I have heard all that you have to say, and which you have repeated very frequently, and I do not wish to detain the Committee; but it is a puzzle to me?—I have already named the advantages which he would have by not being required to find more than one-fourth of the purchase-money; of course, he could mortgage up to the extent that the fourth would allow.

1625. But under your plan the man could not get more than the three-fourths at the very most on mortgage of his estate; he would have to pay the one-fourth out of his own pocket?—He is in that position to start with, only with none of the evils of borrowing.

1626. But in that case he is in a worse position than under the present system?—I scarcely admit that a man of that kind would be able to borrow money at less than 4 per cent.

1627. If he is to pay 4 per cent. in what way would he be better off if he has to pay 4 per cent. to the local authority than to a private owner?—The advantages I have named. He would never be called upon to repay; he could never have the interest raised upon him, and he would be subject to no fear of foreclosure.

1628. But if he does not pay his quit rent he could be foreclosed on and turned out?—Certainly he could be; but on the other hand under a private mortgage the mortgage might be called in at a most inconvenient time.

1629. But he would have the advantage on the other hand, would he not, of being able to pay off from time to time the private mortgage, and so of getting possession of the freehold?—I start with the assumption that it is a freehold, subject to a quit rent. We have called it a mortgage, but the tenant has to pay a yearly quit rent, an unimprovable rent, if we may call it so; but it can never be raised upon him.

1630. Are you acquainted with the methods in America of paying for the land by what are called vendor's lien notes?—I cannot say that I am.

1631. Do you know, or can you give us any evidence as to the operation of the homestead laws on small holdings?—I am acquainted with the homestead laws as they exist; they vary in

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

almost every State, but the general purport of them is the same, namely, that a man can have about a quarter-section, I think about 160 acres.

1632. Supposing any legislation to be passed for the purpose of favouring small holders, would you recommend an incorporation of the homestead law?—I do not think that it would be carried out in England, because a portion of this land is free from seizure for any liability.

1633. A portion of the estate is not liable?—Yes.

1634. Would you recommend that such a law should be applied to our small holdings in this country?—There would be a great difficulty in applying it to an old country, as the local authority must be secured; it is easy enough to apply it to a new one.

1635. I think that, in reply to Question 672, you agree with me that a far larger proportion of labour is employed on small holdings of chiefly grass land than upon large holdings of arable?—I have not a doubt about that; and to illustrate that I would, if the Committee would allow me, just to quote an observation of a small holder in Worcestershire who farms about four acres of land; he states, on that question, "The land will not produce unless you labour it" (these are notes made at the time), "and manure it. I work hard; but my land is a bank, and I put everything into it, being sure of a good return; I manure it heavily, and I find the more I put in the more I get out. It is impossible to say what the land will not do if you treat it well. I have worked hard, but am now comfortable in my old age." And that is so important a part of my contention that I would quote to the Committee other statements to the same effect. In answer to the honourable Member's question, I say that the number of hands employed on small holdings is very much larger, especially if you put it as a larger amount of labour, which amounts to the same thing, whether employed or not. I could illustrate it from large farms I know that used to employ a large number of hands that do not employ a third of the number now, and from small farms that are always well worked with labour.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

1636. In reply to Question 816 you said that you found that a compulsory clause would not be needed with reference to the acquisition of land; I should like to know why you think so?—I think to begin with, that it would not be needed for the reasons that I gave.

1637. I am not able to follow the answer that you gave there. Your answer was, "I find that the compulsory clause would not be needed, and I feel that it would never be put into operation," (I am leaving out unnecessary words), "we have now representative county bodies who are more or less subj ct to the wish of the electors, and therefore it might be presumed that they would take the necessary steps," to put the Act in motion. How could they put the Act in motion if they were not able to acquire the land?—But I presume that if they were willing to put the Act in motion there would be land to be had.

1638. But supposing that there is not land to be had?—If it should prove after some experience of the Act that there was not land to be had, then it would be one of the greatest argu-

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

ments to get compulsory powers, and it would make the acquisition of compulsory powers very easy.

1639. Has anything transpired since you introduced your Bill in 1888 to lead you to think that land will be had?—No. Personally I prefer the compulsory clauses; but there is great opposition to them, and at the same time under the present laws of compensation for compulsory purchase of land there are enormous expenses attached to the acquisition of land in such quantities; and I do not think that the compulsory law would be operative for a time.

1640. May I ask also whether you approve of the expensive system which now obtains, and the dilatory process with regard to the compulsory clauses under the Allotments Act, for instance; it is not a necessary part, is it, of the compulsory clauses to have all those delays and expenses?—No; but I want a practical Bill. My object in bringing the Bill forward is to pass it, and not to raise every conceivable question of reforms and put them into the Bill.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

1641. Do not you think that you would be much more likely to get land by voluntary agreement if we had the compulsory clauses in the Bill, as the last resort?—I do not think so, when it is a question of getting large areas of land for small holdings. It is quite a different matter from having compulsory powers to get a few acres of land for allotments. At the same time I am in favour of compulsory clauses if they are found to be necessary.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

1642. You mean to say that you think the Bill has a better chance as a Bill, of being turned into an Act, without compulsory clauses being put into it?—Yes. I find opposition to them on both sides of the House; and among the economical school especially.

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Friday, 10*th May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrence.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. LORD WANTAGE, K.C.B., V.C., attending by permission of the House of Lords; Examined.

Chairman.

1643. I THINK you are a landowner in Berkshire and Northamptonshire?—Yes, I own land in both counties; I and my wife inherited estates from Lord Overstone, both in Berkshire and Northamptonshire.

1644. Do you farm any portion of your property?—Yes, in Berkshire and Northamptonshire I farm considerably. In Northamptonshire I farmed to a great extent compulsorily, and in Berkshire I have farmed about 4,000 acres of land originally compulsorily, that is, it was thrown on my hands, and now I am so well satisfied with the success of my farming operations that I should be very indisposed to let it. With regard to Northampton, I may say that I do not think that Lord Overstone up to 1879 ever had 20*l.* of arrears on the whole of his estate.

1645. I suppose it was a very low-rented estate?—It was good land, but not particularly low-rented. He took a great delight in telling his friends that the estate gave him no trouble whatever, and every penny of his rents was paid most punctually; but in his latter years of his life the aspect of affairs was different; his rents tumbled down very much, to the extent of fully 30 per cent., and what vexed him more than anything was that he had a good deal of land thrown on his own hands which he did not at all like. Lord Overstone was a political economist; he was not much in favour of allotments. He was pleased to see labourers with their gardens, cultivating a few flowers and vegetables; but he thought that it ought not to go beyond that.

1646. May I ask if you share his opinions in that respect?—I had the very highest opinion of his judgment; but circumstances are very much changed since those days. He thought that it

Chairman—continued.

was best for the labourer to give the whole of his time to the farmer who hired him; he thought that that was the most advantageous arrangement both to the labourer and for the farmer.

1647. I think that you have yourself taken considerable interest in facilitating the division of land into small holdings?—Yes, I have promoted the system of small holdings and allotments. I do not think I have stimulated it in the least degree, but wherever there has been any disposition on the part of the labourer or other parties to have land, I have always complied with it most readily.

1648. Are you speaking now of small allotments?—Yes. I wrote to my agent the day before yesterday, and I got his answer showing that I have got 1,360 allotments on my property, exclusive of cottage gardens.

1649. What would be the average size of those allotments?—The average would be a quarter of an acre. Some go beyond an acre.

1650. I think that is a little outside the scope of our present inquiry, because we are specially instructed to consider small holdings as distinct from allotments, and so I will only ask you generally as to them, whether you are satisfied with the result?—It is so difficult to draw a precise line between an allotment holder and a small holder. I presume an allotment holder is a man who cultivates an acre. In addition, however, to allotments, I have some small holders on my property who latterly have been cultivating the land and doing it successfully.

1651. Without drawing any strict line we are considering small holders to be persons who hold from 5 to 100 acres of land, either as owners or as tenants; have you any such tenants on your

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Chairman—continued.

property?—Yes; I have got an increasing number of men holding 50 acres; I do not think I can say I have got many, but I should think I must have about 30.

1652. When a small holder comes upon your property does he find the buildings or have you to provide them?—Sometimes I have provided buildings, and at other times not. To take as an instance a case as to which I have the agreement here, which I will hand to you. I have given the man there two fields without a scrap of building, or a shed, or anything upon the land; I have let him the land fairly low. I have drawn up a very simple agreement, which I have here, together with a little sketch of the land drawn by my agent (*handing the same to the Chairman*). That case I mention as a specimen. The man there pays a small rent and I give him a few boards and poles, and simple sort of assistance of that sort, he putting up the buildings himself. I have no doubt when he goes he will carry the whole thing off, if he does go. I think the holding there is about 20 acres.

1653. Will such a tenant put up a residence?—No; I never contemplated that.

1654. He would reside off the land, therefore?—Yes; he resides off the land. I think that man is a retired policeman; he is not an agricultural labourer. He has been there three years, and is doing well and is satisfied.

1655. May I ask if there are any facilities for the purchase of holdings on your estate?—On my own property I have not done anything to encourage purchase. If a man came and was disposed to purchase and pay down a certain sum, I should be very willing to entertain the proposal; but such a proposal has never come before either myself or my agent.

1656. Before leaving the question of allotments, I would ask you whether the allotment holders pay their rents in advance, or in the usual way?—In all my agreements I stipulate that the rent is to be paid in advance; I think that is quite in harmony with what the people themselves are desirous of doing. I let my allotments in two ways; sometimes I let them direct to the labourer, or to the party whoever he may be, and in other cases I have let to associations.

1657. Then, coming to the special questions referred to this Committee, do you consider that there is any diminution in the class of yeomen farmers?—Speaking from my experience of Northamptonshire and Berkshire, I am sorry to say that there has decidedly been a very great diminution of yeomen farmers. When I first went into Berkshire in 1858 there was a very fine class of landowner; the old-fashioned highly respectable holder, who cultivated his own land; his daughters were ladies in all senses of the word, and his sons were sporting fellows, generally fond of shooting and hunting, and I have no doubt lived like squires rather beyond their means. I think I am right in saying that that class has disappeared; hardly any cases, or perhaps there may be one or two of the old yeomen farmers, are still to be found.

Chairman—continued.

1658. By yeomen farmers, I presume you mean farmers owning their own land?—Owning their own land.

1659. Were those people of whom you speak large farmers?—Yes; generally men owning perhaps 300 or 400 acres, or something of that sort; they were old-fashioned people with a very high opinion of their own character and their own position.

1660. To what causes do you attribute their extinction?—I am bound to say what has extinguished them is free trade in corn; the great competition which has brought such a quantity of cheap food into the country has knocked those yeoman farmers on the head. I can attribute their extinction to no other cause except that.

1661. Except so far as fiscal legislation is concerned, do you not think, as I understand, that legislation has had any effect in reducing the number of that class?—I do not think so.

1662. Do you think there is any possibility of reviving that class?—I do not anticipate we shall ever see the yeoman class again revived. If the small landowner ever is revived again he will be a very different person from the yeoman farmer; he will be a person owning the land, no doubt, but I think he will have some other means of maintenance besides what he derives from the land; he will be either a small tradesman or an artizan, or one of that numerous class of persons, instances of which will at once probably occur to your mind, who would derive great advantage from the possession of land which would aid and assist them, but would not be their chief maintenance.

1663. In such cases they would, I suppose, not look solely to the economical result, but partly to the amenity of holding land?—Yes, there is no doubt that the pleasure of owning land would be a very important element in their desire to obtain it.

1664. If it were possible without injustice of any kind to any class, would it, in your opinion, be desirable to multiply small landowners?—I answer that by saying most distinctly that it would be most desirable.

1665. Then I will ask you whether, in your opinion, anything ought to be done to facilitate such a desirable result?—I think that it is difficult to precisely say whether anything could be done except by facilitating the transfer of land. I think that there has been a very great difficulty in getting land, and I do not know how a man of small means who wants to buy land is to proceed to do it.

1666. Do you mean that the law expenses would stand in his way?—I mean that the law expenses are heavy in comparison to the small amount of land which he wishes to acquire; a poor man hardly knows how to proceed; his only course is to go to an attorney and put himself into the hands of the attorney, and then the process is slow and tedious and expensive.

1667. All that would be remedied, would it not, if there were large estates for which the title was verified once for all?—I think so; I think the fact of verifying the title once for all, and

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Chairman—continued.

and not requiring to have to go through the process every time the land changes hands would much cheapen the process.

1668. What I mean is that if, say, 1,000 acres were bought, and the title were ascertained for that 1,000 acres, that title would afterwards be good without further expense for separate lots of 50 or 100 acres that might have to be sold from it?—Quite so.

1669. I think you are chairman of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company?—Yes, I am the chairman of that company.

1670. Would you just say what was the object of that company?—If you will allow me I will give you what Lord Derby said about it. When the thing was first mooted there were some very influential people who took part in the movement. I think it was Mr. Auberon Herbert who first started the idea. He wrote to me about it, and there was a meeting at Willis's Rooms. This meeting was attended by influential people, among them the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Westminster, and Lords Ripon, Northampton, Pembroke, Cranbrook, Carnarvon, and many others. Lord Derby did not attend the meeting, but wrote approving of the object of the meeting, and said that the establishment of a company as proposed for the purpose of buying estates and re-selling them in small lots was the most practical method of bringing land within reach of the poorer class of purchasers. Many excellent speeches were made on that occasion, and it ended in a small sum of money being contributed. Eventually a company was formed, and directors were appointed. I will mention their names, because they have given so much care and time to the thing, and taken so much trouble that I should much like that you should know who they are. They were the Honourable R. Preston Bruce, Member for Fifeshire; Mr. Robert Mowbray, also a Member of Parliament, Mr. Albert Pell, who gave evidence the other day, Mr. Clare Sewell-Read, Mr. Elias Pitts Squarey, the well-known land agent of Great George street, Mr. Stafford Howard, of Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire, Sir William Brampton Gurdon, and myself. Those are all still directors of the company, except Mr. Albert Pell, who found that he had so many engagements that he was obliged to give up his position as director. We proceeded then to form a company.

1671. You were about to tell us what the object of the company was?—The object was to buy land in large plots, and to sell it off in small portions to labourers and to any persons, and also to let.

1672. Was the object of the company rather philanthropic than for profit?—We had a good many discussions about that. We rather wished it not to be philanthropic; we wished it to be a business undertaking, and to a certain extent we have made it so. We have paid an average of 3 per cent. for the last five years. As I say, we did not want it to be philanthropic; we wanted to make it a commercial success.

Chairman—continued.

1673. How much land has the company acquired?—We have acquired three estates; the Lamborne Estate we acquired in 1885, the Cottenham and Histon Estate, in Cambridgeshire, we bought in 1886, and the Foxham and Chippenham Estate we bought in 1889.

1674. Would you state the size of those estates?—The Lamborne Estate is 411 acres.

1675. Have you any objection to give us the prices?—The price of the Lamborne Estate averaged 10 *l.* per acre. The Cottenham Estate was 115 acres. The price of that was considerably more; it was better land. The Foxham Estate was 152 acres. The Foxham Estate, I may say, is in Wiltshire; it is property which belongs to Lord Lansdowne.

1676. What was the price of the Foxham Estate?—£.4,500 for 152 acres; that is about 30 *l.* an acre. The price of the Cottenham and Histon Estate, consisting of 115 acres, was 4,162 *l.* This includes the cost of enfranchising the Histon portion of the property.

1677. Up to the present time what quantities have been sold from those estates?—The quantity sold is very small, I am sorry to say; it is really almost a failure as regards selling. I am speaking of the Lamborne Estate now. We have only sold two acres at 26 *l.* an acre, and 17 acres at 21 *l.* an acre to one man on that estate.

1678. May I ask you how you account for the large difference between the cost of land to the company and the cost at which it was sold to the present owner?—We made a beneficial purchase; and, although I say it was bought at 10 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre, there was a considerable bit of down which was really not worth 10 *l.* an acre. The land, which we have sold at that high price, is a choice bit of land, the best land. The person to whom we sold those two acres right off, and the 17 acres by deferred payments, is here, and if you wish it he can tell you how he purchased the two acres at once, paying sovereigns down for the land; and how he is now in process of paying for the 17 acres by deferred payments year by year. He will be able to answer any questions you wish to ask him as to how he is succeeding.

1679. Those, I understand, are all the sales on the Lamborne Estate?—That is all we have been able to sell upon the Lamborne Estate. The secretary to the company reminds me that we sold off 145 acres of down land which was not suitable for our own purpose; but that was not to a little man. We got 1,500 *l.* for it, which we have used for the purposes of the company. Then, there is another man also at Lamborne to whom we sold two acres at 19 *l.* 10 *s.* per acre. I should like to tell you that, though we have not sold, we have let every portion of it.

1680. I was coming to the letting afterwards; I thought it was more convenient to take the sales first. Will you now take the Cottenham Estate?—On the Cottenham Estate we have sold to a man called Atkinson nine acres of pasture and two acres of arable.

1681. At what price?—We have sold the pasture at 630 *l.*; that is to say, 70 *l.* an acre, and

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Chairman—continued.

the two acres of arable we have sold for 100 *l.*, that is at the rate of 50 *l.* an acre.

1681. That is nearly double the price that the company paid for the land?—That is so. There was an old house which Atkinson bought at 80 *l.*

1683. Has the company incurred any expenses in improving the land?—Yes, the company put the land into some sort of shape, and did a little to the house, and spent some money, but not very much.

1684. Is that all you have sold upon the Cottenham Estate?—That is all we have sold on the Cottenham Estate. There again this land is sold on the deferred system.

1685. Then can you tell us what the sales have been on the third estate?—As regards the third estate, that is the Foxham Estate, we have only had it a very short time. We have got a tenant, who was a tenant of Lord Lansdowne, who still occupies the farm, and he begs us very hard to let him go on occupying; but I am afraid we shall have to be hard-hearted and turn him out, because we bought it with the view of cutting it up; but he has a holding which gives him another two years. When he goes out, however, we shall set to work and divide that portion of the estate into little portions and sell them; and we fully believe we shall be able to get a market for them.

1686. Now will you tell us what quantities have been let on these various estates?—We have let every portion of the Lamborne Estate.

1687. When you let, for what term do you let?—We let under the agricultural holdings year by year by ordinary lease, but in every case we have given the option to the tenants to purchase if they like.

1688. At what rate do you let?—We have let the land at rents varying according to the value of the land from 1 *l.* up to 2 *l.*

1689, Then you are getting rent at the rate of 2 *l.* per acre and upwards for land which cost 10 *l.* an acre?—The land which is let at 2 *l.* per acre is Cambridgeshire land which cost about 38 *l.* per acre.

1690. The Berkshire was a very advantageous purchase, was it not?—It was a very advantageous purchase. It was bought just at the time when you might say land was being chucked away. But there was other land in the neighbourhood which was bought even cheaper than that. There was a very nice estate sold at 7 *l.* an acre.

1691. What number of tenants have you?—I think we have got about 10 tenants on the Lamborne Estate; we have 68 altogether on the three properties.

1692. Are all the lands let in the other two estates also?—Yes, they are all let.

1693. Have you had many applications to purchase land?—No, we have not had very many. I might explain that, as a rule, when we have purchased land in the neighbourhood we have rather thought it was fair and reasonable to give the persons in the immediate neighbourhood the first chance of hiring, and we have really had such a run upon the land, and such a demand for it that we have had it taken up, I may say, in a week. We have never had land which we could offer to persons coming from a distance.

Chairman—continued.

1694. Do you mean for sale?—For purchase. We have offered it to persons residing in the neighbourhood where the purchase has been made, but as a rule, they prefer hiring.

1695. Would you state to the Committee the terms and conditions on which the company offer land for sale?—A deposit of 10 per cent. on the purchase money, and half-yearly payments of the balance and interest at 5 per cent., extending over a period of 20 years, or more if required.

1696. That is to say, payments at 5 per cent. if repaid in 20 years; and I suppose less if repaid in a longer period?—For the convenience of the purchasers the payment is so calculated that every year they pay the same sum, a portion being for the redemption of the land and a portion being interest. Of course the one diminishes as years go on; we calculate it so as to make the payment the same sum every year. For instance, in the case of the man Warrack, he pays, half-yearly, 8 *l.* 15 *s.*, of which interest is 5 *l.* 17 *s.* (in his case he is at 4 per cent.), and the instalment of the purchase-money is 2 *l.* 18 *s.*

1697. What is the period of repayment there?—In Warrack's case it is 27 years.

1698. That comes to more than 5 per cent., does it not?—It is 4 per cent. on the balance of the purchase-money which remains due to the company I have said.

1698*. But the payment of interest with the instalment is more than 5 per cent. per annum on the sum due, is it not?—The half-yearly payment is 8 *l.* 15 *s.*

1699. That is 17 *l.* 10 *s.* per annum; the balance due is 292 *l.*, so that the payment is at the rate of about 6 per cent.?—That includes 4 per cent. interest, and the remainder towards paying off the principal.

1700. He is more favourably treated really?—Yes.

1701. I think I understand it now. I understood you before to say that the payment of interest and the instalment averaged 5 per cent.; but I take it that what you meant was that the interest was calculated at the rate of 5 per cent. and the instalment in addition?—Yes. But in Warrack's case the rate of interest is 4 per cent.

1702. And in such cases of course the total payment would be more than 6 per cent?—Yes.

1703. So far as your experience has gone, have existing purchasers readily complied with the conditions and terms of the company?—Yes, they have complied very readily. Those who are tenants of course have had reductions made like any other tenants; we have given them, I think, 10 per cent. back on bad years; we have treated them like other tenants, as to giving them certain reductions.

1704. Speaking generally, do you think that they are satisfied with their holdings?—I have no doubt that they are satisfied; they are so much satisfied that some of them have taken more land from adjacent landowners, and added to their holdings considerably.

1705. What is the state of the cultivation of those

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Chairman—continued.

those small holdings?—They principally go on the *petite culture* system; that is, poultry rearing, calves, and a system of having a good many sources of profit; they also grow corn.

1706. Do they keep the land in good condition?—Very good; better than the neighbouring farms.

1707. I am referring to both tenants and purchasers; I mean the cultivators generally?—Quite so.

1708. I gather from what you have said that the demand for land to purchase is not greater than the company can supply, but on the contrary?—The demand for land is not.

1709. There is a full demand for tenancies, that is leases; but no considerable demand, I understand, for the purchase of the land?—That is so.

1710. How do you account for the absence of the demand for purchase?—I think there are two schools, so far as I can see, amongst these labourers. Taking one man whom I have urged to purchase, I have said to him, "I am astonished you do not purchase;" and the man says, "I think I can make more by hiring land; supposing I have a couple of hundred pounds and I buy some sheep and some implements, and stock-in-trade, I can do better by expending the money in that way; I can get 5 per cent. in the one case and perhaps I should not get 3 per cent. in the other. I can do better by hiring than I can by purchasing." Then there is another school who would be represented by Mr. Warrack, who say, "No, I am doing better by having purchased; it is my land, and the land is improving, and I am satisfied that my system is the best." As a rule, however, English tenants prefer to hire; they think they can do better.

1711. I should like to follow that a little more closely. Mr. Warrack, I believe, purchased 17 acres for 362 *l.* 10 *s.*; that is about 21 *l.* 10 *s.* per acre?—Yes.

1712. What would he have had to pay if he had rented that land?—I really cannot say what he would have paid.

1713. His land was sold to him at 21 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre; perhaps that would suggest to you what rent you would have charged for it?—He would have paid probably for his land 22 *s.* an acre.

1714. That would have been 18 *l.* 14 *s.* per annum rent?—Yes.

1715. Now he actually does pay 17 *l.* 10 *s.*?—Yes.

1716. But he has paid down 73 *l.* as a deposit?—Yes, he has paid a deposit of 73 *l.*, which is 20 per cent. on the purchase.

1717. His annual payment is less than his payment would have been for rent?—Yes, if the rent of that land was 22 *s.*; but when I say 22 *s.*, I may be a little wrong.

1718. What I was looking to is the disadvantage to which the labourer might consider himself subjected by purchasing; that, apparently, would consist in the necessity of having to find this deposit?—Yes.

1719. It would not consist, apparently, in his

Chairman—continued.

subsequent payments, because those would probably not exceed the payment under the rent system, according to the figures you have just given?—I should have thought they would exceed it, to a slight extent, if he is eventually to become possessed of the land.

1720. His instalments are only paid upon three-fourths of the purchase money?—Yes.

1721. Upon that amount the annual payment is less than the rent for the whole of the land?—Yes.

1722. The deposit was 25 per cent. in the case of Mr. Warrack, but in other cases I understand that you are content to receive only 10 per cent. as a deposit; is that so?—The deposit in the Warrack case was 20 per cent.

1723. In your statement of the terms and conditions I thought you said that you required to have a deposit of 10 per cent. of the value?—Yes, but practically we are willing to take 20 or 10 according to circumstances. For instance, in the case of the other man whom we sold the land to, Mr. Atkinson, the purchase-money was 810 *l.*; his deposit was 150 *l.*, which is about 20 per cent.

1724. Referring to your previous answers, I gather that you think that having to find this deposit is really the obstacle which prevents parties becoming purchasers of the land?—Yes, I think it is.

1725. Do you think that the tenants would become owners supposing, instead of requiring any deposit, you asked for a larger annual payment, so as to cover the interest and instalments upon the whole of the property?—I think that would probably facilitate matters, because they would not have then to put down money, which is scarce.

1726. All the tenants, I think, have the option of purchasing by deferred payments?—They all have the option of purchasing by deferred payments.

1727. Where a tenant contracts to purchase, what happens if he fails to make good any one of the annual instalments?—That question was put to us by persons anxious to purchase, and we agreed that the holding would be sold, and if there was anything over, after satisfying the Company, the balance should be handed to the tenant.

1728. That is after satisfying your claims upon him?—Yes, otherwise all his annual payments and his deposit money would all be lost, because he failed to meet his requirements.

1729. Now which do you think most desirable: that those people should be tenants, or that they should be owners; which would you prefer from the point of view of the company?—I should prefer their being owners.

1730. Do you think that ownership is a stimulus to cultivators?—A very great stimulus; I think a man works twice as hard if he is owner.

1731. However well they are doing as tenants, you have no doubt they would do better if they were owners?—I feel satisfisd they would.

1732. Is the facility for mortgaging lands a drawback to the creation of small holdings in

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Chairman—continued.

your opinion?—I think that it is a very serious drawback.

1733. In what way?—In the way of the temptation which is put in the man's hands to raise money upon his property. He becomes burdened with debt.

1734. And then the property is sold and ceases to be a small holding, I suppose?—Yes, then it is sold.

1735. What class of people are best adapted for these small holdings?—The small village artizans, blacksmiths, and persons hauling on the roads, bakers, butchers, and all sorts of little tradesmen, wheelrights, and men generally of that class; that is the class of men who is most likely to succeed.

1736. We have heard a great deal of the migration of labourers from the country to towns; do you think that the reverse process could be satisfactorily established?—Yes, I think so. I should be very pleased to see a tide setting back from the big towns into the rural districts, of men who have been able to save a little money and come back and purchase land and cultivate it themselves.

1737. Do you think there is any inclination to such a movement?—I think there is. I think if there was an opportunity of purchasing land we should have a good many men who would invest their savings in land and build a little home for themselves, and cultivate their land.

1738. How do you reconcile that with the fact that the facilities you offer have not been largely availed of?—Our purchases of these estates have been in certain parishes where the labourers have at once jumped into the advantages which we have offered. We have not gone outside the parish.

1739. In fact you have really hardly as yet tested the question of the demand for ownership, if I follow your answer correctly, because the demand for tenancies has been so great that your land has been taken up before you have had time to offer it for ownership?—Yes, that has really been so.

1740. Do you contemplate any large extensions of your operations?—We propose as we get more shares in our company taken up to continue to buy where we can do so advantageously.

1741. Do you think that the agricultural produce of land is increased by the creation of small holdings?—Yes, I do. I think a man cultivating a small holding will produce twice as much as a neighbouring farmer who is cultivating a large area. Out of his land he will produce twice as much per acre, I think, as a large farmer is doing.

1742. Does the question of wages affect the position of the small holder?—I think the question of wages is a very great difficulty now on farms. When you hire a man per day, the chances are that he really gives you a very short day, and does not work up to his strength during the day; but if that man were working on land which belonged to him, he would put a great deal more labour into it, and do a great deal more in the day's work.

1743. We have been endeavouring to obtain from some of the witnesses a comparative balance sheet as between large holdings and small holdings. I gather from your last answer as to wages, that you would think that it would be difficult to obtain such a balance sheet, because in the case of a larger farm the whole of the labour would be charged at so much per hour, while in the case of a small holding a great deal of the labour that the small holder puts into his land might be considered as a labour of love?—Yes.

1744. A small holder, according to your view, readily gives a great deal more labour than he would think of offering if he were hired?—Yes, I quite agree with that.

1745. Then, as regards buildings, is the small holder at an advantage or a disadvantage, as compared with a large farmer?—I think, as regards buildings, the little holder does everything very much more cheaply than the large holder does; he is able to put up his own homestead and house his own cattle, and probably he does a great deal with his own hands, and he will do it more cheaply than a landowner will. In my own case I am certain that the buildings I put up, which are practically little better, would cost me twice as much as the buildings that would be put by a small proprietor on his own land. Then in the event of the slightest repairs having to be made, if, for instance, a tile falls off, or a gate gets out of order, the tenant sends for a carpenter at 5 *s.* a day, whereas a man on his own land would do the repairs himself for nothing.

1746. Do you consider that the rural population migrate voluntary to the towns?—Yes, I think they do; I think the migration is absolutely voluntary; and, so far as I can see, there is nothing in our land laws which makes the people leave the agritultural districts. It is the general wish to better their condition and their interests, and get more excitement that induces them to go; and the strongest and best of our agricultural population, both men and women, are constantly and steadily migrating from the agricultural districts into the towns.

1747. In your opinion the natural consequence of ambition and desire for change would lead to a steady flow from the country to the towns?—Yes, I think so.

1748. At all times and under all circumstances?—Yes.

1749. Unless that flow in one direction, is not the depopulation of the agricultural districts a certainty?—Yes.

1750. Unless there is a compensating influence to determine the flow in the opposite direction, we must look to the gradual depopulation of the agricultural districts?—Yes, I think so.

1751. I gather you are of opinion that it would be desirable to offer facilities for determining such a flow from the towns to the country?—Yes, certainly. I should like, with your permission,

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Chairman—continued.

mission, just to quote a few words which you will find in Mr. Bryce's work on the American Commonwealth, where he says this in regard to America: For many years past there has been an indraft of the people from the rural districts to the cities. More than one-fourth of the whole 60,000,000 are now it is estimated to be found in cities; and the transfer of people from a rural to an urban life goes on all the faster because it is due not merely to economic causes such as operate all the world over, and to the spirit of enterprise which is strong in the American youth, but also to the distaste which the average native American feels for the isolation of farm life and the monotony of farm labour." That is Mr. Bryce's description of what takes place in America, and I believe precisely the same thing is taking place in England.

1752. Supposing those internal causes are allowed to operate without any check at all, it must infallibly be the result that this depopulation which you deplore will take place?—Yes; I do not think the numbers much diminish, but they do not increase; I think that the best young men and women leave the parishes.

1753. Is there not another result from these same causes, namely, that the number of small holders tends considerably to diminish?—It is so in the country districts.

1754. May I ask you do you think, on social and political grounds, that is a safe thing?—No, I think it is one of those points which requires the attention of statesmen. I think it requires to be looked into and carefully considered to see whether some remedy cannot be found for it.

1755. You would think then, I understand, independently of economic considerations there are strong political reasons why some efforts should be made to multiply the owners of land?—I think so.

1756. Now can you suggest any additional facilities for that purpose?—The influence of the little company in which I am interested, is infinitesimal; it has done nothing comparatively speaking, although we had some leading men at our first meeting, who made speeches expressing how important it was to have some system of distribution of land among small owners; yet nothing was done, and I doubt very much whether voluntary effort can do anything to promote the subdivision of land among the poorer classes.

1757. Therefore, if anything is to be done in this direction, we must look to legislation to effect our object?—If you talk of legislation, the first thing as it seems to me that should be done in the way of legislation, is to get rid of all the embarrasments which belong to the transfer of land. I might mention, as an example, that on one of the estates we have purchased, the Foxham Estate, we have been nine months endeavouring to get a title, and we have not got it yet, although you might well suppose that the Marquess of Landowne had his title deeds in perfect order, which doubtless he has; and the curious thing is that although we have not yet purchased the estate we have sold a portion of it.

Chairman—continued.

1758. You regard, as of the first importance, a measure for the simplification of title and the cheapening of transfer?—Yes.

1759. Would you be prepared to go further; have you any further suggestions to make?—I think the matter is so important, and I attach so much value to this point for every reason (not only for the happiness which would result from a larger distribution of the ownership of land, and also for political reasons in the highest sense, namely, of increasing the body of men interested in maintaining the rights of property), that I should be very glad to see an experiment made, even if it was attended with some risk.

1760. On social and political grounds the Legislature has consented to great experiments for the creation of a peasant proprietary in Ireland, has it not?—Yes.

1761. Would you think it desirable that that experiment in some form or other should be extended to England and Scotland?—I think that the matter is of such importance that I should be in favour of a well-considered experiment being made which might be tentative to a certain extent at first, even though there was some risk in it.

1762. Dealing with it only as a question of experiment, would you see any objection to State assistance being granted for the purpose in the shape of loans?—I should see no objection to that.

1763. Would you object to authorising local authorities throughout the country to borrow money from the Government, and to use it in the purchase of estates for the purpose of creating small holdings?—I think I heard you put to Mr. Pell an analogous question to that, and Mr. Pell said that he would not like to see the experiment tried at the cost of the ratepayers.

1764. That was Mr. Pell's opinion; do you share that opinion?—I think that if the experiment is tried the cost ought not to rest exclusively either upon the landowner or the land occupiers.

1765. But do you think that the risk of such an experiment would be great, having regard to your own experience?—I do not think it would be great. It would not be popular to begin with.

1766. If it were unpopular to begin with it would not be done, would it, because these bodies are popularly elected?—Yes. But those who vote are not precisely those who have to pay. I will take as an instance, if you will permit me, a case in my own parishes where there are 600 ratepayers; those ratepayers scarcely pay any rates. They might say that they would try the experiment. The experiment would be tried at my risk or at the landowner's risk.

1767. The landowners, I assume, would certainly share very largely in the social and political advantages of such an experiment; I imagine you will agree with me that the landowner would benefit greatly by the multiplication of small ownerships and the security which that would give to their property?—In the long run the landowner would benefit, but immediately he might

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Chairman—continued.

might not; he would have some of his land taken away and no great advantage.

1768. Pardon me; I do not think you have to consider that as the hypothesis that is suggested; I will put this case; suppose in your own county, I will not say the parish authority for that might be too small, but the County Council should have power given to it to expend a certain sum of money, limited by Parliament bearing a certain proportion to the total rateable value of the parish in purchasing land voluntarily, not compulsorily, from the present owners and in appropriating it for the purpose of creating small holdings, in such a case it would be an experiment and the risk and the possibility of loss would be limited by Statute it could only be something exceedingly small; the land would always be there and would be the property of the community as represented by the County Council, the management would be in the hands of a responsible body like the County Council. In such a case as that would the experiment involve a risk which you would fear to undertake?—The larger the area which is subjected to the risk, the better I should be satisfied. The whole of the county rate being subject to the risk I think would be a great advantage. I think I should even go a step further, and I should make not only the county but the borough rates as well liable. I would throw them together, because the boroughs would derive also an advantage from this national improvement.

1769. According to any proposals of the kind the borough councils would have the same powers as the county councils have, and each in turn might, if it so pleased, purchase land for this purpose; it would be a voluntary act on the part of the council, whether of the county or borough, but you would not put them together; they would act separately, would they not?—For this purpose I would make the area as large as it was in the County Government Bill as originally brought in, when it included boroughs and counties together. I think they would work better together. One object is to have good persons to work the system; men who will take trouble and will supervise it; joint committees of town councillors and county councillors would work well together, each bringing special knowledge to bear.

1770. Have you any doubt that such men could be found on county councils?—I think from a large area, among say 50 councillors, you could find a certain number of men who would devote their attention to it.

1771. You are aware that town councils of great cities now manage gas and water, and vast undertakings of that kind, and also in many cases large landed property?—No doubt they do.

1772. Do you know whether there has ever been any difficulty in finding persons capable of honest and effect management of large properties?—I do not know that there has ever been a difficulty; I should think, probably, that there would not be.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

1773. I am sorry I had not the advantage of hearing the beginning of your evidence, but I should like to ask one or two questions upon some statements that I have heard. I think you made the statement that the produce upon small holdings, in your opinion, is twice as great per acre as it is upon large ones?—Yes; I think I said it was even greater.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1774. May I ask what holdings you are speaking of, and in what part of England; or does that observation apply generally to the whole country?—I should say that it applies generally; I should apply it generally; but certainly in the district I am acquainted with my experience is that a person cultivating a small holding will get more per acre from his holding than an average farmer will. I do not mean to say that he would get more than a large capitalist putting his 10*l.* per acre on to the land, but those are rare and far between.

1775. Have you had personal experience of the comparative results from large farms and small farms, generally, throughout England?—Only my own observation.

1776. You have given a good deal of observation to the relative produce of small and large holdings in many parts of the country, have you?—Yes, I have.

1777. And do you find, taking England as a whole, that is the general result, according to your personal experience?—Yes, it is.

1778. I think you said a much greater amount of labour was bestowed upon small holdings than upon the large ones?—Yes.

1779. That makes it difficult to arrive at any general result as to the relative profits, does it not?—Yes, no doubt.

1780. I suppose, for instance, if the small holding was trenched instead of being ploughed, it would produce a great deal more?—Spade cultivation I have no doubt, with the attention and care that the spade is accompanied with, would produce more.

1781. But although it would produce more, would the results, in your opinion, be equally profitable?—I think it would be more profitable.

1782. In comparison to the outlay that had been bestowed upon it?—I think practically you get more from the land, but I understand you to suggest that in order to get more produce you would have to spend more in labour upon it.

1783. The question I put to you was this; I understood you to say that, as a rule, the greater amount of produce produced upon the small holding was because there was more labour bestowed upon it; what I wanted to arrive at was whether the result would be profitable in relation to the outlay?—Yes, I think it would be profitable.

1784. That is to say, if the small holding was cultivated by spade labour instead of by ploughing you still think that in proportion to the outlay the profits on the small holding would be greater?—It is difficult to follow that precisely, because, taking a man who may work 12 hours for you and 12 hours for himself, I say that in the 12 hours he works for himself he will do a great deal more than in the 12 hours he works for you.

1785. Because

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1785. Because his labour is better employed when it is for himself; you think it would lead to this result?—Yes, I think he will get a better result out of it.

1786. I gather you would like to see a large extension of small holdings throughout the country?—Yes.

1787. Would you propose freehold or tenancies? —I should like to see freehold.

1788. Do you consider that that can be carried out on any considerable scale so as to be economically successful?—I think so.

1789. Do you see any difficulty in regard to the creation of the buildings that would be necessary?—I think if you go to a builder the cost of the building you put up is excessive compared to what a man with a little ingenuity of his own could put it up for for himself. I think a small holder could put up his buildings far more cheaply than you or I, or any other landowner can, and I think that those buildings are just as good, which cost 50 per cent. less, as if a higher price had been paid for them.

1790. Do I understand that you contemplate the conversion of large farms into a number of small ones, or do you propose to create small holdings out of some other land which is not occupied at present?—The latter case is what I should prefer to see.

1791. In your view what land is there suitable for the purpose, taking the country as a whole? —I think throughout the country there is a great deal of land which landowners would be very glad to sell if they found persons willing to buy.

1792. Do you mean land that is not already occupied as farms?—Yes, I should say so. I have no personal experience of Essex, but I suppose we have all heard of the very large areas of land in Essex which are abandoned.

1793. A great deal of it is strong land, is it not?—Strong clay land.

1794. Do you think it would be suitable for small holdings?—I think strong clay (except sandy land, which is worse) is the last thing I should myself wish to touch if I were a small holder. I quite admit that, but I presume that land is not all of that character.

1795. Can you suggest suitable land elsewhere than in Essex?—Yes, in my own county I can point to land which could be had.

1796. Then assuming that the land of the proper quality, which you think desirable, is available, what size of holdings on the average would you recommend?—I should say from 30 to 50 acres; something of that sort.

1797. Where buildings have to be created, what would be the average outlay per acre to give buildings suitable and necessary for the purpose?—I should think that on a farm of 50 acres, 100 *l.* would do all that was necessary.

1798. Could you do it for that?—For a house, and the necessary buildings for cattle, I should think 150 *l.* would do everything.

1799. How much would the house cost?—The house would cost about 80 *l.*

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1800. Would that be as good as most of the ordinary labourers' cottages in the present day? —Much better.

1801. What is the cheapest site at which a cottage for a labourer can be built in these days?— You probably would not build a cottage under 150 *l.*

1802. Taking that figure, which is not very far off what I should have taken, do you think they would be built very much cheaper by the small freeholder that you propose to create?—Yes.

1803. Do you contemplate that he would do the work himself to a great extent?—Yes, I contemplate that he would work himself.

1804. Supposing that the house cost from 80 *l.* to 100 *l.*, what would be the necessary outlay upon the buildings?—From 15 *l.* to 20 *l.*, I should say, he could do it for, doing the work himself.

1805. You think that would be ample for all the necessary buildings upon an occupation of 50 acres?—I do.

1806. You do not propose to have the holdings of much less than 50 acres, I understand?— No; I should prefer 50 acres, although I know of cases less than that, and you will be able to ask these questions of a man who will appear here presently, whose holding is less than that.

1807. What I am wanting to arrive at is this: that if you made a small holding half that size, 25 acres or even less than 25 acres, then surely the outlay upon buildings would become a very serious matter; would not that militate against the economical success of the scheme?—As I was stating earlier in my evidence, in my own case, I have let simply a field, or two fields, to little farmers. In one case which I handed up to the Chairman, I let 25 acres, or something of that sort, with no building upon it at all; I charged the man a low rent, and I gave him some planks and some fir poles, and he has put up the whole thing himself; and when he goes away he will carry the whole thing off. He pays me a very fair rent, a better rent than I got before.

1808. Then with regard to what you stated as to the principles of Lord Ashbourne's Act being tried in England as an experiment, I did not quite gather whether you desire to see the experiment carried out by the local authorities or not? —I said that I think it is of such importance to facilitate the bringing into agricultural districts persons who will purchase land and small holders, that I should be glad to see the experiment tried, although I cannot pretend in the least degree that I have thought out any plan at all, still I should be glad to see a well-considered experiment tried tentatively. I should be glad to see the risk attending that experiment spread over a large area such as a county; but I should not like to see the risk spread over the small group of parishes in which the experiment was tried; I should not like to see the rates of that area burdened by such experiment, but if the rate was spread over the whole county, and the boroughs included, I should not hesitate at all as to being in favour of the experiment.

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

1809. The Ashbourne Act might, of course, be carried out as it is in Ireland, or through the agency of local authorities as is proposed in England; have you considered which of those two cases you would prefer?—I do not know what the working of the Ashbourne Act is, and I could not answer that question.

1810. In any case, so far as you are acquainted with it, you would have no objection to seeing it tried as an experiment in this country?—That is so.

Viscount *Curzon.*

1811. Do you think there is any necessity for legislation to facilitate the creation of small holdings?—I think there is a great necessity for the simplification of title deeds, and I should be very glad to see some process of registration which would simplify the transfer of land.

1812. But I gather you do not advocate any measure dealing specially with giving facilities for the creation of small holdings?—No, except in the way that I have explained to the Chairman and Mr. Chaplin; that is as far as I should go. I should be glad to see some experiment tried of a cautious and tentative character.

1813. Is there any system in any foreign country which you think might with advantage be applied to this country?—I do not kmow that there is. I am told that in America the facilities for the registration of land are exceedingly great. The land is registered there, and a man can buy small portions of land as easily as he can buy a ship or any other species of goods.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

1814. If you cheapen the transfer of land you cheapen it for the rich man as well as for the poor man, do you not?—Yes, I think so.

1815. If, therefore, there is a great demand for land, the rich man will be able to compete on the same terms as the poor man for it?—My idea is that the great cost is for the little portions of land; the cost of conveyance for a little portion of land is so great that it is excessive in proportion to the small piece that the man buys.

1816. That is so at present for the rich man as well as for the poor man, is it not?—Yes; but if a rich man buys a large estate the law costs may be high, but they are spread over so large an area that it does not affect him very much.

1817. But do you not think that if the transfer of land was cheapened the rich would buy just as much of land that comes into the market as they do at present?—If a rich man wants land he can get it now; he is not debarred by the cost of transfer very much; I think it is the poor man who is debarred by the cost.

1818. With regard to the buildings which at present exist upon your Lamborne Estate, of what character are they?—The buildings were old homesteads which originally belonged to the farm. Those have been converted in some cases, and in other cases the parties who have bought have put up their own buildings.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

1819. Have they been converted by the company in some cases?—Yes, by the company.

1820. Do the tenants reside on their own holdings?—In some cases they do; in some cases they reside in the adjoining village, and come out and and cultivate the land, which is only a mile from the village.

1821. How was this land occupied before you purchased it?—There was a bankrupt yeoman farmer upon it.

1822. It was one big holding?—Yes; he was one of those yeomen I was describing; an unfortunate yeoman who was ruined.

1823. The buildings were put up by the tenants themselves, I understand, in many cases?—In some cases.

1824. Do you know at all at what cost?—One of those persons will come before your Committee presently, and perhaps you would do better to ask him that question; he will be able to tell you.

1825. With regard to the division of these holdings on the Lamborne Estate, were there hedges already in existence?—The Berkshire land is without hedges; we have no hedges there, it is all open down; there is not a hedge for miles: originally no doubt it was sheep-walk. The boundaries between the properties are marked by stones.

1826. Do they feed sheep there now?—Yes, they do feed sheep.

1827. How do they tend them, and keep them off other people's property?—The shepherds' dogs know the boundaries as well as the shepherds do; and they never let the sheep stray from one property to another.

1828. Does each of these men have a shepherd's dog?—No; I was then speaking of the larger properties. The small holders do not, as a rule, keep sheep on these small holdings.

1829. Is it entirely spade culture on small holdings?—No, it is plough.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

1830. In the case of your own small holdings, where you do not provide cottages, have the people great difficulty in getting cottages?—Yes. The rentals of cottages are very low; but there is a difficulty in getting cottages.

1831. I suppose they live in the villages as a rule?—They live in the villages.

1832. How can a man on first entering upon a holding such as you describe, pay in advance; has he a little capital; is that the idea?—I do not say that they do pay the rent in advance; I say that it ought to be payable in advance. In my own case although on all my own holdings the contract is to pay in advance, yet I believe my agent never does call upon them to pay in advance. The position is this, that if my agent saw a tenant selling all his produce and everything off the land, evidently with the intention of bolting, he would come down upon him and make him pay in advance.

1833. You spoke of the comparative profitableness of small and large holdings being very much to the advantage of small holdings; have you found that to be so in your own experience?—On

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

—On my own farm which I cultivate myself, and into which I put a deal of capital, say 10 *l.* to the acre, I do not find it; I have no doubt I get as much as any man. But stepping off my farm and going to some farmers that cultivate big farms on little capital, and comparing the little holder with them, the little holder will get more than the farmer; in the very vast number of cases the tenants are cultivating more land than they have capital enough to cultivate properly.

1834. I hope you will not be shocked at my asking what was the actual use, apart from their social and sociable qualities, of the yeoman class of farmer; what was their particular value?—I may perhaps remind you of what M. Thiers said about small holders. He said that every acre of land in the hands of a small holder furnishes a musket for the protection of property. That was M. Thiers' view of the advantages of small holders, as you get them in France; there is no more staunch, loyal, and conservative set of men than the present farmers of France; and I have no doubt they have saved the country frequently.

1835. But there is no reason, is there, why that class should not exist at the present day if they adopt means of land cultivation other than growing corn; I understand you to say that they were abolished by the repeal of the Corn Laws?—Abolished by the gradual effect of free trade. See what we spend on imports; we are spending many millions a year, 30 or 40 millions sterling, on all sorts of food, all manner of food that we purchase from abroad. So big a sum of money might be distributed amongst our own small holders, and is a sufficient inducement for them to set properly to work and cultivate their land infinitely better than they do now.

1836. Just let me ask you a question or two about the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company. When you said you sold two acres on the Lamborne Estate for 26 *l.* an acre, having given 10 *l.* per acre, was any price stood out for, or was there any bargaining?—No; we valued the land, and we put a price upon it which we thought it was worth.

1837. In that case the transaction was purely mercantile and not philanthropic at all?—No; we started with the idea of making it a commercial affair.

1838. The deposit in that case would be a great difficulty, would it not, to many men otherwise desirable, as occupants?—Yes, I think that the deposit is a difficulty.

1839. Surely if such prices were got for this land, the company hardly kept in view the object of creating peasant proprietors; it was almost a prohibitive price, was it not?—The company started with the idea of making it a success commercially; and I do not think they could have charged anything less than that.

1840. Then the object of the company was mercantile success, not the creation of peasant proprietorship?—The object was the creation of peasant proprietorship on the very best and most solid foundation, namely, that of commercial success.

1841. You said, as I understand, that in the case of these tenancies they were yearly holdings?—Yes.

1842. They have no leases?—They have no leases.

1843. You do not erect buildings?—We have not erected buildings generally; in one case we have. We have not proceeded absolutely on a fixed rule upon that point. In some cases we put up a bit of building, and in others we left the tenants to put up their own buildings.

1844. In the case of those tenants who put up their own buildings, if you parted with them the buildings would remain the property of the company, would they not?—They would carry them away if they put them up themselves; they are very slight affairs, only a few poles.

1845. I gather that you doubt the success of voluntary efforts to extend small holdings; but if small holdings are so profitable, in your opinion, compared with large ones, is there not an inducement to owners to extend the system of small holdings voluntarily?—They do, I think; I know I do myself. I am extending it, but it is a very slow process.

1846. Your desire is to have that object stimulated, I understand?—Yes.

1847. If you find the experiment fail in a mercantile point of view in the case of your company, have you considered the chance of the system succeeding in the hands of local authorities?—I do not say it has failed in our case, but I quite admit that we have only paid 3 per cent., which is little enough. But one must remember what a small affair it is, and, being a very small affair, all the expenses of management bear a high proportion to the business that we do.

1848. The local authority would have to make the transaction pay, would it not?—Their expenses would be less than the expenses of a company such as this that I am connected with.

1849. Why so?—Because they would deal with larger areas.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

1850. Can you tell me the number of people who were living on these estates when you bought them?—On the Lamborne Estate there was one man, a yeoman farmer.

1851. Do you know how many people he employed?—I should think he employed two. I daresay he employed a shepherd, and perhaps he had a carter, or something of that sort; it would be a very small number.

1852. How many live on it now?—There must be a dozen, I should think.

1853. Practically you have increased on the Lamborne Estate, the people living on the land, from three to a dozen or more?—Yes.

1854. Can you tell me anything about the Cottenham Estate in the same way?—On the

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

Cottenham Estate I believe there was only one tenant before, and he employed a few men, I suppose.

1855. Have you doubled the population on the Cottenham Estate?—More than that; there are 40 tenants on that estate now.

1856. Then practically you have quadrupled the population of that estate?—Yes.

1857. On the other estate of Foxham, how many tenants have you?—Foxham is an estate which we have recently purchased. We have only had it half a year; there are 20 tenants on it now.

1858. Have you altered the population of that estate?—Yes, we have greatly added to it.

1859. Then the general result of your company taking this land has been, in all these three estates which you have taken up, that you have considerably added to the population living on the soil?—That is so.

1860. Do you think that is valuable?—I do, indeed.

1861. And you have fulfilled one of the objects of the creation of the company, by increasing the number of people living on the soil and living by its cultivation.

1862. In what directions is that mainly beneficial, both nationally and locally, in your opinion?—It produces a great increase in the produce of food, and brings more money into the neighbourhood, and stimulates the business of the neighbourhood, and gives employment to a very larger number of persons than heretofore.

1863. And practically it makes the life in the rural districts less dull and less monotonous than it was previously, I suppose?—It improves the condition, certainly.

1864. Do you not think it also adds to the strength and healthiness of the race?—I think it does.

1865. So that one may say the advantage of the system is that it keeps more people on the land, it keeps those people under healthier and better conditions, and it increases vastly the amount of produce?—Quite so.

1866. You said that the people had migrated from rural districts in order to better their condition; do you mean by that that they were unable to live; that the rate of wages and so on was not sufficient to keep them there?—No, I should not say that. I should say that the best and most active young fellows in the parishes go to towns. They get better chances of promotion and advancement there, and they go there.

1867. Your system of creating these small holdings, or any other system of creating small holdings, would give these men in the rural districts those opportunities of bettering their condition which they now have to seek in towns?—Yes, to a great extent I think it would. It would keep them; as farmers say, it would anchor the best men to the land if they had an opportunity of getting holdings of their own.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

1868. Do you think that the produce on these small farms, while greater in quantity, is equally good with that produced on large farms as to quality?—Quite as good.

1869. You think eggs and poultry could be produced as well on small farms as on large ones?—Infinitely better, I think.

1870. Mr. Pell said, in his evidence, that an egg grown on a small holding would be a fusty article; there is no necessity for that, is there?—I do not think he can have said that; he must surely have been misunderstood.

1871. The production of milk for the benefit of the population, and especially of children, would be greater, in all probability, on these small holdings than under the present system of large holdings, would it not?—Yes.

1872. It would be more accessible to the people?—Yes.

1873. You would look upon fruit farming, I suppose, as one of the great sources of profit for these small holders?—When the land was suitable for fruit, but it is not all land that is suitable. A man would only grow fruit on very choice land, and where the exposure was favourable.

1874. Some heavy land, not unfavourably situated, would do for strawberries, would it not?—Yes, if he had a market; it would depend entirely whether he had a market, and also he should have an ample supply of manure, otherwise he would not be able to do well.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

1875. As to paying rent in advance, is it not generally the custom not to ask tenants of small holdings to pay in advance?—In my case it is always in the agreement for allotment holders that they should pay in advance, but it is not customary to ask for it. In my opinion it is very desirable that one should have the power, if necessary, to ask for the rent in advance.

1876. As a matter of fact, do not the tenants of small holdings pay up their rents most regularly, and do not ask for a remission of rent in the same way that larger tenants do?—That is true; they pay more regularly and punctually than larger tenants.

1877. They do not ask for remission of rent in the same way?—That is my experience, and I have 1,360 allotments; may I ask whether you were speaking of allotments specially?

1878. No; I was speaking of small holdings?—In small holdings my experience is not so large; I have only some 20 small holdings, perhaps. But your remark, I should say, is true with regard to them also.

1879. As regards tenants of small holdings going into more profitable work than large farmers, that is especially so in the vicinity of small market towns and large villages, is it not?—Yes.

1880. And tenants of small holdings are more able to go into speculative dealing, and also attending auctions and buying up animals at auctions, at an advantage that the larger tenants have not?—I should think, generally, they have advantages in marketing for small produce better than bigger tenants.

1881. I think you told the Committee that you provide

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

provide on your estate rough material, such as posts, poles and planks for building sheds?—Yes.

1882. When the tenant gives up his holding, do you ask him for any compensation?—He carries what he puts up away with him.

1883. He may take the shed away?—Yes.

1884. What sized holdings do you consider have weathered the agricultural depression best?—I should say that a variety of sizes is the best; I would not have them all of one size; I should have some large farms and some little farms. I would not lay down a rule that one sized farm is the best everywhere, but I should very much prefer to see farms of different sizes.

1885. But have you not found that the tenants of small holdings have weathered the agricultural depression, perhaps more satisfactorily than the the large ones?—Yes; I have.

1886. The tendency at the present time is towards sub-division rather than in the opposite direction, is it not?—Quite so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

1887. As regards the Small Farm and Labourers Land Company, I think you have not mentioned it, but it is the fact, is it not, that the Lamborne estate was presented by you to the company, and does not appear in the capital account of the company?—It was presented by me.

1888. Does the 4,000 *l.* which you mentioned represent the whole cost of the estate?—Yes; 4,100 *l.*

1889. That was a time, was it not, when the price of land was exceptionally low; is land equally available now?—It was a happy moment, no doubt; land was cheap then, but it is very cheap still.

1890. You think it is not materially dearer now?—I think not.

1891. As regards both the Lamborne estate and the Cambridgeshire estate, I understand that you have not found a large demand for purchasing the property, but that there is a demand for tenancies, and that the whole of those estates is let in small tenancies?—Yes.

1892. Generally speaking, has the Lamborne estate and the other estate been divided into what I may call permanent small farms, equipped as small farms, or have the lands been let as accommodation land to persons in the neighbouring villages, and not divided into regular farms?—They are not divided farms, in this sense, that there are no hedgerows at all; but they are so far divided that one man has, for instance, his own 20 acres, and another man has his own 25 acres; their holdings are quite separate.

1893. Do the tenants usually live upon their holdings?—In some four cases they do. In the other cases they live in the village of Lamborne in the case of the Lamborne estate, and come out to their holding; it is only a mile away from the village. The land they cultivate there would be, say, a mile away from their homes.

1894. In the cases where they live upon the holdings, do they find the houses, or have the houses been built?—In the case of Lamborne there was an old farmhouse which we divided into two, and gave one tenant one-half, and the

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

other tenant the other half, and they have lived there in juxta-position very comfortably.

1895. In any other cases have houses been built upon the holdings?—There is another man who built his own house, and there is another man who is now bargaining with us to build his house.

1896. Confining our attention to the man who built his own house, what bargain has he made about building the house?—He is the man who is coming here as a witness, and he will no doubt give you evidence as to that.

1897. I will only ask you in general terms, has he made a bargain with you to build his house?—He bought the two acres right out.

1898. Do you mean that this is the case of the man who bought the land out-and-out?—Yes, he bought the two acres absolutely as his own.

1899. I want to keep to the case of the men who are tenants, and have not bought the land out-and-out; have any of those built houses?—No.

1900. Have you found any houses for them?—No, we only re-arrange the old farmhouse for them, and made it into two tenements.

1901. I gather that you have not yet tackeled that great difficulty with regard to the building of the houses and the equipment of the small farms, which I presume must always occur when a large farm has been divided into several small holdings?—We have divided what was one big farm into a dozen farms, and we have ourselves put up in some cases a shed, and in other instances we have allowed the tenant to put up a shed.

1902. I understand that except in the case of the two farms which you spoke of, where you divided the old farm steading no houses have been built upon holdings?—That is so, because the tenants live in the adjoining village, which is close at hand, and they come out and cultivate the land there just as they would do if it were a farm.

1903. Is that the case also on the estate you spoke of in Cambridgeshire?—In Cambridgeshire they are on very small holdings.

1904. As regards Lamborne are the tenants, persons living by their farms?—Yes.

1905. With no other occupation?—They often have some other work, sometimes they do a little carting; one of the tenants is a blacksmith; they are persons who have another industry to look to.

1906. Up to the present time, putting aside for the moment the case of the man who has bought two acres out-and-out, the Lamborne estate is not divided into fully-equipped farms, farms, is it?—They are what we call fully equipped. They have no house, but they have places where they house the cattle and keep manure.

1907. The land is principally held, I understand, by people living in the neighbouring village, who have chiefly some other trade—Yes.

1908. Do you not think that is state of things under which this system of small holdings is likely to be most successful, that is to say, in the neighbourhood of large villages and small towns?—Yes;

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

—Yes; I think it is more likely to succeed where a man has some other means of maintenance besides his holding.

1909. As regards the Cambridgeshire fruit farms, I suppose they are rather gardens than farms?—Yes, they are about two acres generally. The tenants are mostly labourers.

1910. On what terms do they hold as regards the provision of compensation for fruit trees, in case the tenants go away, because I understand they are tenants; are they yearly tenants, or have they a long lease?—They are only yearly tenants.

1911. They now hold, of course, under a company who, though it desires to put itself upon a mercantile footing, yet is to some extent philanthropic, and they have confidence in it; but, supposing they held under a grasping mercantile company, what security have they for the fruit trees, in case they go away?—When you speak of fruit trees this is land very suitable for fruit, and I am fully hoping that they will plant fruit trees in the future; but at present, as a rule, they are growing the ordinary produce of farm allotments.

1912. Do you think that the tenants, if they were under a mercantile company, would plant fruit trees, unless there is some provision by which they should get compensation?—We shall never disturb them, and they know that perfectly well.

1913. I am supposing that they hold under a purely mercantile company?—I should say we are purely mercantile. I do not think any company would disturb them. I think the men would not scruple to plant trees on their land, but would be quite willing to do so, and would not hesitate, although they do hold on a yearly tenancy.

1914. Seeing the difficulty that there is in inducing people to buy land, do not you think there is a great necessity for some alteration of the law under which a tenant might be made more secure as regards his improvements?—I can hardly say.

1915. You say, I think, that under your system the tenant is allowed to carry away the material of his buildings; does not the ordinary law of England at present enable a grasping landlord to confiscate improvements of that sort?—I do not think so.

1916. Is it not the law that all fixtures belong to the landlord?—Yes, but these are not fixtures. If you put up a brick building, that, I presume, would be a fixture, but I am alluding to buildings put up of a temporary character made of wood; the sort of buildings that a man may carry away.

1917. If the small farm system is to last, I suppose, in a civilized country like this, it would be hardly possible to equip these farms without some fixtures; do you not think therefore that some alteration in the law of fixtures is necessary?—If a man likes we are quite ready to let him buy by deferred payments.

1918. Seeing the difficulty you have found to induce people to buy does it not seem to be necessary to find some means of enabling people to cultivate as tenants with the full confidence that they will not be deprived of their improvements?—I think the Agricultural Holdings Act gives all that you want.

1919. Taking the case of fruit trees; the Agricultural Holdings Act does not give compensation for fruit trees, I believe. Then as regards the difficulty of getting people to buy, I suppose that it is the case that, inasmuch as the purchaser must pay first rent in the shape of interest, and secondly a sinking fund to pay the capital, as a rule in England, if there is no assistance from the State, he must pay more than a tenant would pay?—Yes, he pays his deposit, and then he pays so much each year, a portion being for rent, and another portion being for the gradual purchase of the property.

1920. Then looking to the very great object which it is in your opinion both socially and economically to promote small holdings, do you think that the State or the municipality would be justified in giving some extra assistance towards assisting people to purchase as is done in Ireland?—I do not know whether the State would do it. I should be glad to see some well-considered scheme by which it could be done though, as I said before, I have not thought out the details of any plan.

1921. You expressed an opinion favourable to small holdings and favourable to allotments; what I want to know is, whether you think intermediate small holdings which are larger than allotments, and do not amount to farms, of say, four or six, or up to 10 acres, can be made profitable under present conditions?—I think that is rather small. I should prefer to have a farm of about 50 acres; that would be the better size. An allotment, I take it, is an acre. A man can do that very easily, in my estimation, and still work for a farmer; but if he had to deal with four acres it would be another matter altogether.

1922. You doubt whether he could do it with four acres?—I do not think he could also work for a farmer as well as cultivating four acres of his own. A man can do an acre, as I know, because a man has worked for me on my property for 20 years. He is one of the best men I have, and he cultivates an acre of land.

1923. What does he cultivate on that acre?—He grows barley and some wheat and vegetables, and makes some 10*l.* or 12*l.* a year off that acre clear. He works for me besides, and walks a mile every day to get to his work.

1924. Do you think a tradesmen in a village could with advantage cultivate even an acre in that way?—Yes, with immense advantage.

1925. I understand you have no recent knowledge of your native county of Fife; but I may ask generally, from your interest in the country, comparing your own experience of England with what you have known of Scotland, has it struck you that there is any material difference between the two countries as regards the facilities for small holdings?—There is a material difference, I think, in the characters of the men. I think a Scotchman will often succeed where an Englishman will not. The Scotchman is often more industrious and a harder working man.

1926. Have

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Mr. *Llewellyn.*

1926. Have you any experience of small holdings in grass land?—No, I have not, specially.

1927. Are none of your tenancies grass land?—Some of my small tenants have half grass; they always like to have half, or even a little more grass.

1928. On those estates you speak of, at Lamborne and in Cambridge, have you any tenants of grass land?—Yes, they have a portion of grass.

1929. How do they work it?—They run a cow and a calf or two, or three calves upon it; and they cut a little hay. Calf-rearing is one of the most profitable bits of farming that you can undertake.

1930. Upon what sized piece of land?—Upon a farm of 25 acres you can do a good business in rearing calves. You know what the price of calves is this year; you could not buy a calf now under 3 *l.*; at any rate, they are dear.

1931. They fat them I understand?—Yes, they fat and rear them. A cow can rear two or three calves if you help it along with a little of those patent meals and various sorts of food; a little farmer can do that, while a big farmer would not take the trouble to do it.

1932. How do you deal with the case where you get hold of a tenant whom your agent sees is not doing justice to the land?—He encourages him to do better.

1933. Perhaps you have not hit upon a man who has not been able to work his farm well from any misfortune or otherwise; how would you deal with a case of that sort in your company?—We should deal with him the same as a private individual would.

1934. You would get rid of him?—We would get rid of him if he did not pay.

1935. If he had done damage to your farm, you would have to let it at a less price?—Yes, we should run that risk.

1936. Or if he bolted, the loss would fall on the shareholders of the company?—Yes.

1937. I wish to ask you one question with regard to the houses upon these small holdings; I think you say, though I do not know whether it was on your own estate or on the company's estate, you have still some land not taken up; is that so?—I think we have got it all taken up or nearly all.

1938. Do any of the holdings remain vacant on account of not having houses?—No. They want houses.

1939. In fact, they must have houses where the holdings are at a distance from the village?—Yes; but in this case they are not; they are all near the village.

1940. You said, I think, that a small farmer will get twice as much produce out of the land as a large farmer?—Yes.

1941. In what way does he do that?—By having a greater multiplicity of sources of profit. He would do a little dairying, and a little poultry business, and a little calf-rearing; he would have half-a-dozen sources of profit of that sort which he would make a living out of, which a big farmer would not. The big farmer would, perhaps, go for grain or wheat culture.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

1942. You said, I think, that a small holder puts more into the land in the shape of labour; that is to say, that he works harder?—Yes.

1943. The man whom you hire at 3 *s.* a day would work twice as hard you think if he was working at home?—He would work a great deal harder certainly.

1944. You also said, I think, that the large farmer very often fails to make the full amount, on account of not having put the proper amount of capital into the land?—Yes.

1945. Supposing that a large farmer had capital to put into the land, 10 *l.* an acre, it may be, is there any reason why he should not get as much off that land as a small farmer?—Big farmers neglect dairying, and calf-rearing and poultry; they would not bother about it. They neglect that, and the result is that we go abroad for our eggs and half-a-dozen things which we might get at home. Big farmers often neglect those small things very much.

1946. Surely there are instances where, I am speaking of the dairy country, a man does not neglect dairying, and where the man makes the most that he can of the poultry?—Notoriously in the dairy country they do neglect calves altogether; they will not be bothered with the calves. As soon as the cow calves they get rid of the calf directly. Such a man will not keep a calf; it is not worth his while; he sells it.

1947. He sells it, as a rule, does he not, to butchers?—He sells it to anybody who will buy it.

1948. Do you say that in the dairy country you would not find a great deal of calf-rearing; are you not aware that at the present time a most profitable part of a dairy farm is the rearing of calves?—I have no experience of little dairy farms.

1949. I mean, for instance, a hundred-cow farm?—My experience is that dairies do not trouble about rearing calves; they sell them.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

1950. Do I rightly understand you to say that your company have paid a dividend of 3 per cent.?—Yes; on the average of all the years we have paid 3 per cent.

1951. Have you any idea what the gross profit of the farming would be to enable you to pay such a dividend as that; I observe in these accounts there is a very heavy sum charged for salaries, advertisements, and printing, which bears a very large proportion to the work of the company?—Yes.

1952. If there were no such charges as that there would be a very considerable dividend, would there not?—Yes, a fair dividend.

1953. Do I rightly understand that you only look to 5 per cent. upon the cost of the land as the maximum rental from your tenants?—No; we do not limit our profits. Our profits might be anything, if we could make them.

1954. I have here the account for 1888, which appears to show a loss of 86 *l.*; is that so?—We paid 5 per cent. the first year, and then we paid 4 per cent. I think, and eventually, taking the years one with another, our dividend has been at the rate of 3 per cent.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

1955. I do not know whether I am right, but it seems to me, from looking at this account, that there is no prospect of a net income for the company; is there, in your opinion, any prospect of the company paying a dividend, seeing that it has to pay all these charges for salaries and so on?—The company is a small company, and the charges are large. We have an office and we have an excellent secretary; and all these charges are undoubtedly very considerable in proportion to the very small business we do.

1956. If these same estates were managed by a local authority and there was no charge for salaries and advertising and printing, there would be an adequate return, would there not, for the capital expended?—I quite believe there would; and I believe in the case of this company, when we get a little more capital, we shall go back to the payment of better dividends.

1957. That is to say, when you can spread the charges for your salaries and advertisements and printing over a larger area?—Yes.

1958. Judging from your past experience there is no reason, is there, why a county authority, which will not be saddled with these heavy charges, should not be able to let land at a profit?—I think they would make their 4 per cent. Probably they might borrow at between 3 and 4 per cent.; and I should think they might make a profit of between 4 and 5 per cent.

1959. From what you know of the demand for small holdings in the country, you think, as I understand, that there would be no difficulty in getting tenants who would pay between 4 and 5 per cent. upon the outlay?—I think they would get between 4 and 5 per cent. upon it. The secretary reminds me that I should have added that we have now a third estate which increases our turnover, but does not increase the expenditure in connection with the secretarial and office work.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

1960. You have already answered nearly all the questions which I wanted to put to you, but there are one or two which I should like to put. Have either the estates you mentioned at Lambourne, at Cottenham, or at Foxham, got any special advantages from being near to a large town or near to a railway?—In the case of Lamborne it is quite the reverse; it is about the most abandoned place you could possibly suppose; there is no railway within eight miles certainly, and there is hardly any market.

1961. So that the success in these cases, and in that of Lamborne especially, is not caused by facilities in the way of proximity to a market and to a railway?—Certainly not.

1962. You have said a good deal about building; may we take it generally that whether in letting or selling the company do not consider the provision of the building a difficulty?—They do not; I do not think that there is any difficulty.

1963. From your experience, do you think that having regard to the resources of the small holder he is able to provide himself, if necessary, with the requisite buildings in as good a manner, or a better manner than the company or any landowner could do it for him?—Yes.

1964. And in the case of small holdings generally, if they are near a village, a dwelling-house would be rendered unnecessary by the proximity of the village?—Yes; I think it would.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

1965. When you spoke about the labourer leaving the land, I do not understand you to mean that he leaves the land from a dislike to farming?—No; he does not dislike it.

1966. Instead of going into quarries and mines, or to various centres of industries, do you think that if he could do as well on the land, or had an open career on the land, he would be more likely to remain on the land?—He would stop I think.

1967. In the case of the local authorities undertaking the creation of a peasant proprietary there would, of course, be no expense of management; all the holdings would be sold, and consequently they would be able to do it much cheaper than your company?—I presume that they would be able to do it cheaper.

1968. You spoke of the yeoman class as being a very valuable class; but I think you said that they were ruined by the low prices consequent on free trade?—Yes.

1969. But seeing that the average price of wheat from 1855 to 1881 (which is the free trade period) was 51 *s.* a quarter, is low prices a sufficient reason why these small yeomen should have been ruined?—There is a considerable difference between what it is now, say 30 *s.* and 50 *s.*; that is enough to ruin a man.

1970. Taking it for the free-trade period, the price was 51 *s.* What I am seeking to know is whether there were not causes other than the low prices of produce, such as expensive habits for example, which led to the ruin of this class?—I think that the yeoman lived expensively, and there was no room for a margin, and so when the price of corn fell he could not stand.

1971. That difficulty would not exist, would it, in the case of the creation of the new yeomen class who would not have been accustomed to such expensive habits, but would have economical ideas and habits of living?—I do not think it would; the new yeoman who is created, if he ever is, would be a very different man from the old yeoman.

1972. You admitted the advantages to a man of being a freeholder, and you said you thought that he would prefer to have the freehold, but that he did not like to spend his capital in the purchase, or the part purchase, of the farm, but would prefer rather to spend it in stocking his farm, as I understand;—Yes.

1973. Supposing that there was a scheme, the principle of which would be that he should not be required to pay the purchase-money, or that he should only pay a portion of the purchase-money, the rest remaining subject to a small yearly charge, say of 4 per cent., the man being absolute owner, with power to devise or power to sell his holding, subject only to the yearly payment of this perpetual quit-rent, which never could be raised upon him; would that scheme get over the difficulty?—You mean, as I understand, that he should be subject to a tax upon his land, which he would have always to pay; I am afraid that a man would not like that bargain.

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

bargain. He would like to feel that some day the land would be absolutely his to do what he liked with.

1974. I am supposing that the land is his to devise or to sell; that he is practically a freeholder, subject to this yearly rate upon him, just as in the case of a tithe, for instance?—If he could sell the land, or do as he chose with it, it would, as I understand, be more like a mortgage upon the land. I should think that might impede him if he wanted to sell it or to part with it.

1975. He would sell always subject to that charge. Would not that get over the difficulty of requiring him to pay down money for the purchase; he would be absolute owner for all purposes, but would not be required to pay down the purchase-money?—Do I understand in that case he would have to pay down nothing?

1976. I am leaving that open. I am supposing there should be no risk to the local authority in any way; that is part of the assumption?—I could hardly say whether that would get over the difficulty.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

1977. I understood you to say that you were rather disappointed in your small farm estate at there being so few purchasers coming forward?—Yes.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

1978. Would you not attribute that to the difficulty of a small purchaser obtaining a loan upon his land on mortgage, in order to pay up whatever may be required of the purchase-money?—I hardly know what the reason is. I think that the chief reason is that he has a difficulty in finding the money to put down.

1979. Supposing that there was a registration of title, and title was simplified, and it was easy to obtain advances upon land; do not you think that then the difficulty of purchasing would be done away with?—If you mean so that he could at once mortgage the land I do not know whether it would be so or not.

1980. Supposing that land was transferred in the cheap way, as is done in America and other foreign countries, would not the difficulty be met?—You suggest, as I understand, that he could mortgage his land in order to pay the deposit. I do not think he would buy the land in that way.

1981. If you could facilitate the operation of his finding the money, would you not have more purchasers?—Perhaps so, if a man could borrow the money on very easy terms.

Mr. JAMES WARRACK, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

1982. YOU are, I think, a small farmer on the Lamborne Estate?—Yes.

1983 When did you purchase land?—In 1885; I think it was nearly four years ago.

1984. How much did you purchase?—Seventeen acres first.

1985. That was arable land?—Part of it was arable and part of it was grass.

1986. What price did you pay for the arable land?—£. 21. 10 *s.* an acre.

1987. That is 362 *l.* 10 *s.* for the 17 acres?—Yes.

1988. What deposit did you pay upon that sum?—£. 73. 2 *s.*

1989. That leaves a balance of about 290 *l.*?—Yes.

1990. What payments have you to make for that sum?—£. 8. 15 *s.* half-yearly.

1991. That is 17 *l.* 10 *s.* a-year?—Yes.

1992. For how long do you make those payments?—For 27 years.

1993. You will then become the absolute owner of the land?—Yes, I suppose so.

1994. I think in June 1886 you purchased some grass land?—Yes, two acres.

1995. How much did you pay for the grass land?—£. 26. 10 *s.* an acre.

1996. That is 53 *l.* for the whole?—Yes.

1997. Did you pay that all down at once?—Yes.

1998. How much did it cost you for legal expenses?—Twenty shillings or 21 *s.*, I forget which.

1999. Have you built a house upon the land?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

2000. How many rooms has it?—There are four rooms, a back kitchen, and a dairy.

2001. How much did it cost you?—About 85 *l.*, as near as I can say.

2002. Had you previously built any other buildings?—Yes, I built a cow-shed and a barn.

2003. What did you build your house of?—Concrete.

2004. How much did the barn, stable, and cow-shed cost?—The building altogether cost me, as near as I can say, about 22 *l.*

2005. What materials were they built of?—Of timber, and thatched.

2006. You lived in the barn, I think, before your house was finished, did you not?—For a few months.

2007. You have also got a pig-stye and a poultry shed, have you not?—Yes.

2008. Is that all included in the 22 *l.* for the outbuildings?—Yes.

2009. You did not employ a builder, I suppose?—Not for the farm buildings, but I had a builder for the house.

2010. You were your own architect, I suppose?—Yes.

2011. And the farm buildings you put up yourself?—Yes.

2012. Have you fenced your land?—Part of it; two fields, one of four and the other of two acres; six acres altogether.

2013. How much did that cost you?—About 5 *l.*, as near as I can say.

2014. What stock do you keep?—I have three cows at present.

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Chairman—continued.

2015. Have you any horses?—I have one horse.

2016. Have you any pigs?—I have five pigs.

2017. And I suppose you have a lot of poultry?—Yes.

2018. Have you any sheep?—No.

2019. What does the land grow?—It grows all ordinary crops except wheat; I never tried wheat; but they grow wheat in the neighbourhood round.

2020. You do not grow wheat, you say?—No.

2021. Do you grow barley?—Yes.

2022. Do you grow oats?—Yes.

2023. Turnips?—Yes.

2024. Potatoes?—Yes.

2025. Garden vegetables?—Yes.

2026. And any hay—Yes, meadow hay and clover hay too.

2027. Can you tell us what you sold off the farm last year; how much barley did you sell?—About 15 *l.* worth.

2028. How much oats did you sell?—Three pounds fifteen shillings. Of course I grow more, but I consumed a great part of it.

2029. I suppose you consume both barley and oats on your own holding?—Yes.

2030. But, in addition to what you consumed, you sold 15 *l.* worth of barley and 3 *l.* 15 *s.* worth of oats?—Yes.

2031. Did you sell any stock?—I sold three calves.

2032. What did they bring in?—Almost 9 *l.*

2033. Did the cows produce anything more?—Yes, butter and calves, together, made up about 27 *l.* for the three cows for the 12 months.

2034. Did you sell any milk?—Milk is not included in that amount.

2035. The calves and butter produced 27 *l.*, I understand?—Yes, in 12 months.

2036. Do you sell any pigs for bacon?—Yes, the pigs realised about 7 *l.* 10 *s.*

2037. What did the poultry and eggs sell for?—About 5 *l.*

2038. Then there is sundries, skim-milk and vegetables?—Skim-milk we sold at the door, and we sold some potatoes and some vegetables.

2039. How much did you sell of them?—About 1 *l.* 15 *s.* worth.

2040. Do you keep all the land in your own occupation?—I have let 18 poles.

2041. What did you get for that?—£. 2 10 *s.*

2042. All those receipts together came, I think, to over 60 *l.*?—Yes.

2043. That is what you have got off the land, besides what you have consumed yourself?—Yes.

2044. You pay to the company 17 *l.* 10 *s.*; what do you pay for rates and taxes?—A little over 2 *l.*; I think it is 2 *l.* 2 *s.* or 2 *l.* 3 *s.*

2045. And the land-tax is 10 *s.*?—Yes.

2046. That would make about 20 *l.* for rent and taxes; that leaves you about 40 *l.* net?—Yes.

2047. Is that about what you get?—Yes.

2048. Can you live on it?—Yes.

2049. What family have you?—A wife and two children.

2050. Can you live comfortably, and pay your way?—Well, I have done it, and I stand as good as when I commenced, at any rate, and I think a little better.

Chairman—continued.

2051. You have decided to buy your land; why do you not rent it?—I preferred to buy it; I cannot tell you the reason exactly, but I thought that I would rather to have it to do what I liked with it.

2052. You wanted to be a landowner?—Yes.

2053. Do you think you can do better with it if you buy it than you could if you rented the same land?—I have not had much experience of it. But at one time I was rather hardly used in my youth at a farm where I was born and brought up; I spent the best part of my life working for a landlord and improving a little farm, and when the lease ran out I was told that I was to give considerably more rent, more than I thought it was worth, and if I did not I was told I must go; I never forgot that, and I thought that if I could afford to have a little bit of land of my own I would like it better.

2054. You thought you would like to make your improvements for yourself in the future?—Yes, that was at the bottom of it.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

2055. You said that the house you built had four rooms; what were the rooms?—Two downstairs, two upstairs, and a small kitchen at the back and a dairy.

2056. Two bedrooms?—Yes.

2057. You have a wife and two children, and that is all, as I understand?—Yes.

2058. Do you cultivate the whole of the land yourself?—Yes.

2059. Your house, I understand, cost 85 *l.* you say?—Yes.

2060. Just tell me again about the buildings; you have a cow-house?—Yes, a place to hold three cows, and it will hold two horses.

2061. Have you a stable besides?—They are divided; it is all under one roof with a division between.

2062. You say that there is room for three cows and two horses?—Yes, it would hold two horses, but I have only got one at present.

2063. Would it hold three cows and two horses at the same time?—Yes.

2064. And you have a barn?—Yes; it is not a large one, but it is large enough for the position.

2065. And you have a pig-stye?—Yes.

2066. And a poultry shed?—Yes.

2067. And those all cost you say 22 *l.*?—Yes.

2068. Did you build them yourself?—Yes.

2069. What material are they built of?—Timber.

2070. Then, I think, you said you sold 15 *l.* worth of barley and 3 *l.* 15 *s.* worth of oats?—Yes.

2071. Did I understand you to say that you sold three cows?—Three calves.

2072. You received in money, as the proceeds of your holding for the year, 60 *l.*?—Yes.

2073. What would a labourer earn at the ordinary weekly wages in the district that you live in?—Twelve shillings a week is the ordinary wages in that neighbourhood.

2074. Have

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

2074. Have wages in the district fallen of late years, or have they not?—There is not much difference since I came to that neighbourhood.

2075. You have only been there four years, I understand?—Yes.

2076. What sort of seasons have there been?—They have been very backward seasons since I came there.

2077. On the whole, have they been favourable seasons or not?—They have been against us, I think.

2078. Where were you before that?—I lived in Sussex.

2079. Did you live in Sussex for some years?—Yes; for about seven years.

2080. I suppose that those seven years were worse seasons than the last four?—I believe so.

2081. As compared with the previous seven years, the last four years have been rather better, have they not?—It was rather wet last year; the weather was rather against us last harvest in getting in the crops, and in haymaking.

2082. But, upon the whole, do I understand you to say that the last four years, during which you have been on this holding, have been more favourable for farming than the previous seven years?—Yes.

2083. During those seven years we were having very bad times, and the last four years have been very much better?—I think so.

2084. Supposing that you had had this farm during those bad years, you would not have realised so much profit?—I presume not quite so much.

2085. After deducting your payment to the company you have 40 *l.* to the good on the year, I understand?—Yes.

2086. Taking the rate of wages which I understand prevails in your district at the present time, that would give you a balance of advantage over a man who was receiving weekly wages of 10 *l.* a year?—Yes.

2087. But then, of course, you get your living for yourself and your family out of the farm, besides?—Yes.

2088. Have you calculated, or could you give us any idea as to the difference that a bad year would make to you in your general returns?—I have not had so long an experience there yet, that I could say.

2089. You have been, I gather, tolerably successful, up till now, in your freehold?—Yes.

2090. That has been during a period of four comparatively favourable years?—Yes.

2091. But you have had no experience as yet of the profits to be derived from a small holding during bad seasons?—No.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

2092. How do you cultivate the 17 acres of ploughed land; what do you divide it in?—I mainly cultivate the 17 acres in four-course rotation.

2093. What is that with you?—Barley and oats, grass seeds and roots, turnips and potatoes.

2094. Have you got any account at all of the quantity of stuff which you grow that is consumed in your own house?—No.

2095. What do you grow on your land that you consume in your family?—Perhaps the milk, butter, eggs, a fowl sometimes, and vegetables of all kinds; turnips, potatoes, carrots, and onions; and fruit. We have a few apple-trees and plum-trees, and currants.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

2096. You do not raise any meat, I suppose?—I have not this last year, but the year before I killed a big pig.

2097. Then it would be milk, butter, eggs, vegetables, and a pig?—Yes.

2098. You have not kept any account of the value of the produce that you consumed?—No.

2099. The barley you consumed, I suppose, was for fatting your pigs?—Yes.

2100. The rest of the barley which you did not sell would be represented in the shape of the 7 *l.* 10 *s.* which you realised in pigs?—Yes, a quantity of barley.

2101. The oats the horse would have?—Yes.

2102. You had three calves last year to sell, I understand?—Yes.

2103. The rate of wages, you say, is 12 *s.* a week; what do the men get in harvest time in your part of the country?—They get a little more in harvest time.

2104. What is the harvest worth to a man?—I scarcely could tell you, because I have had nothing to do with it there. They do a good deal of piece-work.

2105. They considerably more than double their wages for five or six weeks in harvest-time, do they not?—No; they would not double them, I think.

2106. Is not a harvest worth something like 10 *l.* to a labourer in Berkshire?—I should not think it was anything like 10 *l.*

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2107. When you say that the rate of wages of a labourer is about 12 *s.*, does he get that constantly all the year round?—I should think so; that would be the average, I should think.

2108. Is that liable to any deduction for bad weather?—No, not in the case of a steady man who is engaged for six months in the same place.

2109. There would be no deduction to be made on that amount, you think?—I think not.

2110. You have 17 acres of land, I understand?—Yes; 19 altogether.

2111. You have 17 acres in your own occupation, I think; what condition was that land in when you took it?—In a shocking bad state.

2112. What condition is it in now?—It is not nearly what it should be, but it is a great deal better.

2113. Has it vastly improved?—I think it is; it is clean and got a little into heart.

2114. Do you think that the land is more valuable than it was when you took it?—Yes, I think so.

2115. Have you any idea of how much more you would get for it now if you let it than you would have got four years ago?—I can tell you for a fact that on Wednesday last a neighbour bid me 6 *l.* for two acres of my land to rent.

2116. And you are paying about 1 *l.* an acre for it, are you not?—I bought it at 26 *l.* an acre, and

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

and this neighbour offered me 6 *l.* for the two acres to rent it.

2117. Do you consider that the difference between about 1 *l.* 10 *s.* and the 3 *l.* per acre is the difference in the annual value of the land four years ago and the value now?—Yes; I have not got it all up so well as that part, but that would be it.

2118. Besides this money which you have got off the land, to the amount of some 40 *l.* a year, you have made a profit which has gone into the improvement of the land?—Yes, of course, the dung made on it has tended to do that, and the cultivation has tended to do it.

2119. You will forgive me asking the question, but do you think you have lived as well as an agricultural labourer, and spent as much upon yourself and your family?—I should expect rather better.

2120. Considerably better?—I should think so. I know I work harder; at least, I work harder hours.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

2121. I understand you to say that you do not employ any one; you do all the work yourself?—Yes. Since I have been there, there is an old man who has some land beside me, and he assists me in harvest time, and I assist him sometimes with a horse, but I have never been any money out of pocket for labour.

2122. Had you to find the timber yourself for the outbuildings?—Yes, principally.

2123. Not altogether?—Not altogether.

2124. The reason I ask is that I wanted to know whether the 22 *l.* for building covered the price of the timber and putting up the outbuildings?—I have got a little help perhaps.

2125. You do not belong to the part of the country where your holding is, I understand?—No.

2126. You said that you had lived in Sussex before?—Yes.

2127. May I ask where you came from originally?—Aberdeenshire.

2128. Are any of the other holders in the district in which you live making as good a thing out of their holdings as you are?—Yes, they can do as well as me. There is an old man alongside of me having two acres who is doing better than me.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

2129. You have a wife and two children, I understand?—Yes.

2130. How old are your children?—One is six years old and the other two.

2131. Then they cannot help you; does your wife help on the farm?—Yes.

2132. Who takes your produce to market?—The carrier takes part of it to Wantage. Of course I take most of the barley and oats to market.

2133. Who takes your eggs and butter?—There is a carrier passes the door going to Wantage once a week.

Sir *George Campbell.*

2134. What part of Aberdeenshire do you come from?—Ellon.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

2135. Do I understand you to say that you had worked as a farm labourer on a farm?—Not there; I worked on a little farm that I was born and brought up on. My father was a small farmer.

2136. You were brought up upon that farm?—Yes.

2137. What induced you to come south?—I could scarcely tell you; I came by chance as it were.

2138. Did you work upon a farm in Sussex?—Yes.

2139. As a labourer?—Not altogether; I was a sort of farm bailiff.

2140. Then you came to Lamborne to take this farm?—Yes.

2141. And you think it has succeeded?—I am not very much afraid of it.

2142. I understand that you have not a pair of horses; what have you in the way of a horse?—I have one horse, but I sometims have two. I sometimes buy one and do the work with it, and then get rid of it; I have done that once or twice, but I have only one at present.

2143. How do you manage with regard to ploughing?—I can plough with one; I have a light one-horse plough.

2144. Is it a light soil?—It is not heavy land; it is a workable sort of land.

2145. Is there no system of borrowing a horse from your neighbours to make up a pair when you want to plough?—That does not answer; we tried it a little, but it does not work.

2146. You always have one horse?—Yes; always one.

2147. Do you do any gardening except your own vegetables; do you sell any garden produce?—Yes; we have sold some onions and carrots, and some black currants and red currants.

2148. You say there is a neighbour next yourself who is doing still better; did he buy his land?—He is only a tenant, he pays 30 *s.* rent.

2149. Where does he live?—He lives in the village.

2150. Has he any other trade?—He was a carpenter; but I do not think he does anything else, or very little else.

2151. Do you do any carting, or any other work for anybody?—Nothing to speak of.

2152. You live entirely by your farm?—Yes.

2153. Do you make much by poultry?—We had a good deal last year, more than we had done before. We sent them to Brighton by Parcel Post, to a lady that my wife was acquainted with, who took one and sometimes two every week.

2154. Would you rather have a small farm in Berkshire or in Aberdeenshire?—I do not know I am sure. I thought at one time that I would rather go back to Aberdeenshire, and I went down for a visit, but I like Berkshire.

2155. Do the people make as much out of the land in Berkshire as the people do in Aberdeenshire?—Perhaps they do not make quite as much; I do not say that they do.

2156. I need

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Mr. *Llewellyn.*

2156. I need hardly ask you the question; you started with your own money, did you not?—Yes.

2157. You did not borrow?—No.

2158. Did your neighbours start with their own money, or did they borrow?—I do not think they borrowed.

2159. How would you like to start a farm of that size if you had to borrow the whole of the money?—It would depend a little upon how you could get the money.

2160. Knowing what you would have to pay for the money if you had to borrow it, would you like to start a farm in that way?—I should not be very much afraid of it. I think it would work.

2161. Even if you had to borrow the money?—Yes, I should think so.

2162. How would you like to buy a holding worth 400 *l.*, for instance, upon these terms; to pay down a quarter of the value (that is 100 *l.*), and to pay interest upon the rest (that is upon 300 *l.*) at 4½ per cent. as a perpetual charge for the rest of your life, or for the rest of your term; do you think that would be a good arrangement?—There might be a better arrangement, but still that would do.

2163. Do you think that a better arrangement would be to pay down the whole purchase money to start with, or else if you could not do that to pay down 100 *l.*, and then pay off the rest when you could; do you think that that would be preferable?—I think it would be advantageous for a small capitalist to make it as easy as possible, and extend the payment of it over a good many years.

2164. You think that extending the payment over a good many years would be preferable to having to pay a rent for ever?—Certainly, because eventually the land would be your own.

2165. If you had the choice of the two schemes you would prefer, I understand, to be able to pay it off when you could?—Yes.

2166. How do you sell your produce, such as butter and eggs?—We sell them to the grocers to be sold again.

2167. How far off would the grocers be?—In Wantage, about seven miles away. Sometimes we sell it in Lamborne; last year we sent it all to Lamborne; and this year we commenced sending to Lamborne; but there is a lot of butter in Lamborne, and they will scarcely take it, unless we take it all out in goods and groceries. In a small village like Lamborne they cannot get rid of it, and they will scarcely take the butter unless we take it out in other goods.

2168. Have you no one else to sell it to besides the grocers?—No.

2169. Is there no man in Wantage or near you who makes up the butter and sends it to London?—No.

2170. Would you tell me what prices you get; what did you get for your barley last year?—Twenty-six shillings a quarter.

2171. That is a good price?—I got 30 *s.* the year before.

2172. Who do you sell it to?—Mr. Clark.

2173. What is he?—A miller and corn dealer.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

2174. Do you take it again in meal?—No, not the barley.

2175. What do you get for your oats?—Fifteen shillings.

2176. Fifteen shillings a sack?—No; 15 *s.* a quarter.

2177. That is a poor price, is it not?—It is just an average price; but then I had not to cart them; I sold them at home.

2178. Whom did you sell them to, a neighbour?—Yes, a gentleman who keeps racehorses.

2179. Did he buy the oats at 15 *s.* a quarter for his racehorses?—He bought them; I do not know that the racehorses got them.

2180. What did you get for your calves?—Nine pounds for the three.

2181. How long did you keep them before you sold them?—I forget exactly; they were calved in the spring time, and I sold them some time in the summer.

2182. Did you keep them two or three months?—More than that, I think.

2183. Did you sell them at 3 *l.* a-piece?—I do not remember how much a-piece; they fetched 9 *l.* for the three altogether.

2184. What did you get for butter?—We got 16 *d.* a pound in March, and now it is down to 13 *d.* a pound.

2185. Can you get 1 *s.* all the year round?—Yes; we can get that all the year.

2186. Do you sell the pigs fatted?—I sold a litter of pigs last year, and a sow, and we made about 7 *l.* 10 *s.* last year.

2187. With regard to extra labour, do you employ no extra labour at all in getting your corn in?—No; as I said just now, this old neighbour of mine assists me sometimes, and I pay him back in work when I can.

2188. You do not pay out of pocket for any extra labour?—No; I pay nothing out of pocket.

2189. With regard to the horse, do you ever have to borrow a horse?—I have done so occasionally, I suppose, but I should pay it back in the same way myself.

2190. What do you value the whole of your stock at?—The cows cost me 33 *l.* when I bought them.

2191. The three?—Yes.

2192. But that was not when they were cows, was it?—Yes, I think so.

2193. You would value them higher than that now, I presume?—They were heifers when I bought them, that was three years ago.

2194. Have you got 100 *l.* worth of stock?—No, I have not.

2195. Not at any time?—No.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

2196. Do I understand you to say that you were a farmer for some years in Sussex?—No, a farm-bailiff.

2197. You work longer hours, you say, than the labourers do in your district?—Yes.

2198. But you are quite willing to work longer hours, as I understand, because all the produce of your labour would be your own?—Yes.

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Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2199. With regard to these buildings, which you say cost you 22 *l.*, what do you think they would hav cost if you had employed a builder to build them out-and-out, giving the same accommodation?—I should say double, but I have not had much experience.

2200. They would have cost a good deal more, at any rate?—Yes.

2201. Have you got any machinery?—I have got a little one-horse reaping machine, a barley-mow, as we call it.

2202. Have you a reaper of your own?—Yes.

2203. Have you got a chaff-cutter?—Yes.

2204. Have you got a horse-rake?—I have not got a horse-rake.

2205. Are you likely to have one?—I do not think so.

2206. How much barley to the acre did you have last year?—About four quarters.

2207. Supposing that you have bad seasons, do you think that you could manage to live and to hold your own?—I think so; I do not think it can be much worse.

2208. You said that the labourers got 12 *s.* a week; do they get that in winter?—Yes, they are generally engaged for the 12 months.

2209. Would they average 12 *s.* a-week all the year round?—It would be the best that would do so.

2210. Have you not heard of men, within the last two years, getting 10 *s.* a-week?—Yes, and even 9 *s.*

2211. A considerable number?—Yes, plenty that cannot get steady work to do.

2212. When you speak of 12 *s.* a week you speak of the highest rate, do you not?—Yes, I believe it is.

2213. Do you buy any manure to put on your land?—I bought a little last year, but not much.

2214. But you do buy some?—Yes, a little.

2215. And you reckon to manure your land well?—I have got it round better than it was when I took it.

2216. Do you use all you have got on the farm?—Yes.

2217. You do not sell any hay or straw?—No.

2218. You sell nothing off it?—No.

2219. How much manure do you buy?—I only bought just a little last year, but I do not think it paid me.

2220. An honourable Member asked you a question as to the modes of buying a farm. Supposing there were a farm worth 400 *l.*, and you were required to pay 100 *l.* for it, and that then it should be yours, and you had the title-deeds with power to sell or to leave it to your family on the condition that you should pay 4 per cent. for the remaining 300 *l.*, which would be 12 *l.* a year perpetually, would you think it worth while to take advantage of such a scheme as that?—Yes.

2221. That is to say, the 12 *l.* a year could never be raised on you, and if you sold the land it would be subject to that 12 *l.* a year?—I say distinctly I would be greatly in favour of that.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

2222. I want to ask you one question about the state of the land; when you got the land it was in a very bad state you say, and it has been improving ever since?—Yes.

2223. It has given you a better crop every year?—Yes.

2224. So that even if bad years were to come you would now be in a better state to meet a bad year than you were before?—Yes.

2225. Therefore the danger of bad years is practically becoming less every year, is it not?—Yes.

2226. And your farm would be getting more productive every year the more you cultivate?—Yes.

2227. Do you know any Aberdeenshire land which you think would give as good results as the land you have in Berkshire, if you got it on the same conditions?—I believe it would.

2228. There would be no practical difference, you think, as regards climate or situation?—The climate is not so good.

2229. But you think, as I understand, that it would not make any practical difference, so far as the climate is concerned, if you could get land in Aberdeenshire on the same condition as you can get it in Berkshire?—I do not think it would.

2230. Do you know of men who would take advantage of the opportunity you have taken yourself, if such an advantage was afforded to them?—I think plenty would.

2231. Would you have taken advantage of this opportunity if you had had such an opportunity 12 years ago?—I do not know about 12 years ago, but I would have done it years ago. I came from the North to have the chance of doing that.

2232. Was this the first opportunity you had to acquire land under those conditions?—Yes.

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Wednesday, 15th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

The Reverend HORACE CHARLES RIPLEY, M.A., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2233. I THINK you are the Vicar of Minster Lovell, near Witney, in Oxfordshire?—Yes.

2234. How long have you been there?—Sixteen years.

2235. There is an estate, I think, in your parish which was bought by Fergus O'Connor, under the scheme which he proposed for the creation of small holdings?—Yes. The estate originally consisted of 297 acres, and then part of it was sold off, leaving 252 acres 2 roods 4 poles.

2236. As appropriated for the purposes of these small holdings?—Yes. I thought it important to point that out because some mistakes have been made in regard to the quantity. Our original estate was 297 acres, and then part of it was sold off to the farmhouse, the grass land, as not suitable for small holdings; and the rest, the 252 acres 2 roods 4 poles, was divided into 80 small holdings.

2237. What is the size of these small holdings?—They vary from two to three and four acres respectively each, with a house upon it. There are 34 holdings of four acres, 16 of three acres, and 30 of two acres.

2238. Are any of them worked together?—Yes. Several of the holders of them hold a number of allotments as well. They are too small by themselves for a man to get a living off, and successful men invariably go on and add to their holdings. There are 13 men who occupy more than one holding.

2239. Can you tell me what is the largest holding occupied by any one man?—The largest holding occupied by one man is four acres. One man has recently made two allotments of three acres into one of six acres, but that is only one case. The largest holding is 11 acres; that is to say, a man holds two holdings of four acres and one holding of three acres, making 11 acres in all.

Chairman—continued.

2240. In that case, what becomes of the cottages, because there would be three cottages to one holding?—In some cases they sub-let the cottages, and, perhaps, keep one for their storehouse, to store their goods in.

2241. When was the estate purchased?—The estate was purchased, I think, in 1847.

2242. Do you know anything about the price at which it was purchased?—Yes; I can give you the price. The 297 acres were purchased for 11,094 *l.*; and there was a tithe on that property.

2243. Do you know anything of the quality of the land?—Yes. I sent you a map, which will give you an idea of the place. It is a very large estate, extending over a long space along the road, and consequently there is some variation in the land; but the best land is light land, resting on stone brash; and the light land is considered the best land.

2244. How does the price which was paid for the original purchase of the land compare with its present value, as judged by the price of contiguous estates?—With regard to the price of that estate, I feel a little difficulty in answering the question, because I do not know that any has been sold lately. It was bought at a very high price. I ought to say that, in addition to that price, there is a tithe of 89 *l.* 16 *s.*, which of course makes it very much more. It cost 37 *l.* 7 *s.* per acre; it was very dear indeed; and there is a reason why it was so dear, which is this: that the number of members of the National Land Company increased to such an extent, and there was such a tremendous demand for holdings, that they bought up any estates they could get hold of, and consequently they paid an exorbitant price for them.

2245. It would be convenient if you would explain to the Committee what the National Land Company was?—The National Land Company originated

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Chairman—continued

originated by Fergus O'Connor, and then persons subscribed to it. It originated in this way: first of all, there was a meeting in 1845; a great meeting of the Convention, and people were to subscribe to it a certain number of shares. I have got the statistics. One share was 2 *l.* 10 *s.*, one share and a-half was 3 *l.* 15 *s.*, and two shares was 5 *l.* For 5 *l.* a man was to be entitled to ballot for four acres; he was to pay instalments of 3 *d.* or 6 *d* a week, as he was able; and then, when he had paid up the 5 *l.*, he was to be entitled to ballot for a small holding, with a house on it, of four acres. When he had paid up the 3 *l.* 15 *s.*, he was to be entitled to a small holding, with a house on it, of three acres; and when he paid up the 2 *l.* 10 *s.* he was to be entitled to a small holding, with a house on it, of two acres.

2246. That is to say, that he was entitled to become the tenant of a small holding?—No; they were not tenants; they were to become subject to a rent-charge. I do not know whether you would call them leaseholders, but there was a rent-charge of about 10 guineas on four acres. I do not know whether legally that would be called a leasehold or not.

2247. Probably the 10 guineas included the rent of the cottage?—Yes, the 10 guineas included everything.

2248. Was the cottage built by the company?—Yes; I can state the price that the cottages cost. The land was bought, the land was divided, the cottages built, the road made, and everything done by the Land Company. Then those men who subscribed ballotted for the allotments; they are called allotments; they are really small holdings; and the successful ones entered into possession of them. Then a man with a holding of four acres was allowed a capital of 30 *l.* to start with. The land, I may say, was ready ploughed for them, and everything ready for them to enter upon. But I suppose that that 30 *l.* was to be repaid. And an allowance was made in proportion, down to two acres.

2249. All this work was done for them by the National Land Company?—Yes.

2250. And the company was to be repaid, as I understand, in the first place, by a capital sum, which amounted to 5 *l.* on four acres, and in addition by a permanent rent-charge of 10 *l.*, to some extent?—I do not know anything about the 5 *l.* All I understood was that these men were to pay this rent-charge of ten guineas, and then with this rent-charge other land was to be bought to make fresh holdings. I do not know anything about that 5 *l.* that you speak of. All I know is that these men were to pay ten guineas for a rent-charge.

2251. Was that a permanent rent-charge?—Yes, a permanent rent-charge of ten guineas. And the other rule was that they were to pay 5 per cent. for all money advanced. There has been a good deal of confusion about that in the statements that have been made.

2252. That was in addition to the ten guineas?—Yes, I have read up two or three accounts of it. This company was first of all the Chartists' Co-operative Land Society; then it was changed eventually to the National Land Company; but I do not know anything about it more than the ten guineas. I fancied that they thought

Chairman—continued.

originally that the ten guineas would repay them for their outlay.

2253. I believe the company came to grief, did it not?—Yes, the company came to grief. It is a very long case, but the way that they came to grief was this: it was declared to be an illegal company on account of the lottery. These allotments were assigned by ballot, and therefore it was declared to be illegal. Then when they found out that it was illegal they tried to bring it under one of the Friendly Societies Acts, under which these things come. Mr. Tidd-Pratt had to do with that, and when they found that it was illegal they tried to get afterwards an Act of Parliament to legalize it. People got a fright, and then Fergus O'Connor tried to register it under the Friendly Societies Acts with Mr. Tidd-Pratt, and when it was found that that could not be done, eventually a special Act of Parliament was introduced for the purpose of legalising it. And the whole thing was wound up eventually, and the different places sold.

2254. I think there was a mortgage on the estate?—There was a mortgage on Minster Lovell; that caused it to be sold up.

2255. It was sold by the mortgagees?—The mortgagees foreclosed.

2256. And that affected the holders, I suppose?—That affected the whole concern. Through that action the company was set free from any responsibility to the members, so that they had no hold upon it; then their money, I suppose, was confiscated in the case of those who could not purchase, and after that the holdings were sold by auction.

2257. The estate was subsequently sold by the mortgagees?—I believe that the estate was subsequently sold by the mortgagees, or by the gentlemen who purchased it. I believe the solicitor to the company really purchased it; but a great deal of it was eventually sold by auction.

2258. What became of it then; was it brought into one estate?—It was bought by private individuals, so that one man owns one portion, and another another. It is private property just like the houses in a street.

2259. Then the present holders are not the descendants of the original holders?—No, there is not one left.

2260. But they are the descendants of the second class of holders?—There are a few who came in in the second year after it was sold; but they are a different class of men. The first holders were men from the towns; men from Manchester, Carlisle, and other places who ballotted for these holdings, and they had no idea of agriculture; the most laughable stories are told about them; and as soon as the thing collapsed a great many of those men had the good sense to go away to town occupations again.

2261. But if I understand you aright, these men, even if they had understood agriculture, would still have been sold up, because of the embarrassments of the company?—Unless they could have purchased, as I understand, so far as I know.

2262. Therefore their failure is not so much due

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Chairman— continued.

due to any incapacity on their own account, as it is rather to the embarrassment in which the peculiar form of the company placed them?—I suppose it was partly so, because some of them were able to purchase.

2263. But now, as to those who came in as private owners after the company broke up, what class of people were they?—I may say that they came under three heads. First there were those who purchased the freeholds, or bought them subject to a rent-charge, and next there were those who came in as renters; and the class of people who came in afterwards were successful.

2264. Both the freeholders and the renters?—There would be the freeholders and leaseholders and renters; they were successful.

2265. And have they remained, they and their descendants, on the land since that time?—Some of them have been there for years; but from to time there have been, of course, a good many changes.

2266. But the land has always been sold or let since in small holdings?—Yes.

2267. Of what class of the population were these second holders?—They were men from the country, mostly agricultural labourers, or men of some occupation in the country.

2268. And on what terms do they now hold the land?—Do you mean what rents do they pay?

2269. Yes, I suppose that some of them are freeholders?—Some of them are freeholders and some of them are subject to a rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* on four acres.

2270 How does that charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* on four acres compare with the rent of land in the neighbourhood?—Do you mean merely the rent-charge, or the whole rent, because there is a rent besides the 9 *l.* 10 *s.*? For instance, if I go in and buy a leasehold allotment, subject to a payment of 9 *l.* 10 *s.*, then the tenant pays me the whole rent, and I have to pay the 9 *l.* 10 *s.* out of it.

2271. You mean to say that you may sublet it to a tenant at an increased rent?—Yes, the 9 *l.* 10 *s.* does not represent the whole value of the holding.

2272. Then at what rent does the leaseholders stand in the case of a four-acre holding?—They vary from 10 *l.* to 12 *l.* for four acres.

2273. That is including the 9 *l.* 10 *s.*?—Yes.

2274. Then I would ask you again, how does that compare with the ordinary rent of land in the immediate neighbourhood, that is, at the rate of 3 *l.* an acre?—And then there is tithe besides of about 6 *s.* an acre; they pay the tithe as well as this; we will put it at 11 *l.*, as the average between 10 *l.* and 12 *l.*; than there would be about 6 *s.* an acre of tithe.

2275. That would bring up the whole to about 3 *l.* an acre; it would be 2 *l.* 15 *s.* for rent and 6 *s.* for tithe, that makes 3 *l.* 1 *s.*?—Yes, and then there is land tax, and so on.

2276. But the other land would have to pay the same?—Yes.

2277. What is the rent of land in the immediate neighbour to the farmers?—There is a little difficulty in answering that question. For instance, there is about 1,000 acres of land not let; the landlords have it on their own hands. My

Chairman—continued.

land which adjoins the allotments, I let for about 30 *s.* an acre.

2278. Is that glebe land?—Yes; but there are no buildings on it. I let that to the small holders, not in small lots. I have 33 acres which is divided between two of the small holders, and I get 30 *s.* an acre for it. I should think that land was worth from about 25 *s.* to 30 *s.* an acre in Minster Lovell. It depends entirely on the condition into which it has got. There is one farm they say on the other side of these small holdings let at 10 *s.* an acre; they say so. I know it is something like 10 *s.* or 12 *s.* an acre, but it is in a very low condition. It used to be let at 30 *s.* an acre; but that would not be the value of the land.

2279. Even taking 30 *s.* an acre, is it not the fact that these small holdings are rented very highly in proportion to the average value of land in the neighbourhood?—They consider that they are, and I think they are.

2280. That is, even including any value that may attach to their cottage, the rent-charge is very high?—Yes, I should say it was very high. The reason, of course, for that is the expense of building the houses.

2281. If a man is a tenant is he liable to eviction?—Yes.

2282. The same as any ordinary tenant?—Yes.

2283. And has he any power of paying off the rent-charge?—Yes; but that is a matter of agreement as to whether the landlord likes to sell it or not.

2284. Who is the owner of the rent-charge?—The rent-charge is a private property which can be bought and sold in the market.

2285. It belongs to different people, does it?—Yes. Sometimes people like to sell it, and they put it up to auction; and sometimes they make an offer to the people who have the small holding to buy it, and so free them.

2286. Supposing that you bought one of these small holdings subject to the rent charge, you could not be turned out then?—No.

2287. You would practically be the owner, subject to the 9 *l.* 10 *s.* a year?—Yes; and as long as that was paid within the very considerable time that is allowed, I believe (I do not know what it is) he could not be turned out.

2288. And that sum very nearly represents the rack-rent?—The 9 *l.* 10 *s.*; yes.

2289. You have told me that the rack-rent is from 10 *l.* to 12 *l.*?—Yes.

2290. Therefore the 9 *l.* 10 *s.* is very nearly the rack-rent; the beneficial rent is only a few shillings above it?—Yes; but the advantage of that rent-charge system is this: that a man who has 50 *l.* or 100 *l.* can go and buy one of these small holdings; whereas he could not buy a freehold one. Then he feels that the place is his own and he cannot be turned out; he can do as he likes, as the place is his own; and then if he sells it again he gets the advantage of any buildings or improvements that he makes.

2291. Is there any desire on the part of the people to purchase their holdings; do they prefer to purchase?—Yes; the people purchase them when they can.

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Chairman—continued.

2292. What is the value of a holding of four acres subject to 9 *l.* 10 *s.* a year?—That perhaps would sell now for 30 *l.* or 50 *l.*; it is very difficult to say you know, because times are so queer now. I think a man told me he gave a few years ago 130 *l.* for four acres with a rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* It used to bring a great deal more money a few years ago, but it is very uncertain now. I should think that 50 *l.* is quite as much as it would bring.

2293. How are these holders doing?—They are doing fairly well, considering the times.

2294. I suppose that they were more prosperous when agriculture was better?—They were very prosperous indeed about ten years ago. When I first went there the allotments were let for 14 *l.*, and I know one that was let for 17 *l.* 10 *s.* then. There was a great demand for them then.

2295. Was the demand all in the neighbourhood?—It was principally people from the neighbourhood, of course, who applied for them, or bought them and took them; but if they were sold sometimes people in Witney who had a little money to invest, shopkeepers and so on, would buy them as an investment. But the great demand was in consequence of the high rents that were offered for them a few years ago.

2296. Have you any idea what proportion of the present cultivators are themselves the owners of the holdings?—Yes; there are 21 owners of 30 holdings; 21 men hold 30 holdings of their own; some freehold and some subject to a rent-charge.

2297. What I want to know is what proportion are freeholders?—I do not know the proportion of freeholders, simply because I could not go and ask these men these questions, and in the rate-book every man who is a leaseholder is put down as a holder. I know that, taking freeholders and leaseholders together, there are 21 men who hold 30 holdings.

2298. Do you consider that these small holders have done better or worse than the farmers in the neighbourhood?—They have decidedly done better. The saying in the neighbourhood is that the big men have gone to the wall. The biggest of our farmers, one after another, have gone to the wall; men who were thought a great deal of; but the small holders and other small farmers have held their own through all.

2299. What advantage have they had over the big farmers; because they seem to pay a higher rent?—I would not quite put it as an advantage. You see they cultivate their own holdings; that is the great thing; that is the principal advantage. And then the growth of potatoes is another thing. They make their money by their potatoes and their pigs; and the farmers generally cannot cultivate them. I have a balance sheet here by which you will see that the money is made by the potatoes; and that is where they have suffered a great loss. A few years ago potatoes ran from 10 *s.* to 14 *s.* a sack. They are now down to 5 *s.*, and I have known them down to 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a sack. As large holders now flood the market with potatoes small holders cannot get the high prices they used to get.

Chairman—continued.

2300. Is the soil particularly suitable for potatoes?—Yes, it is very fine light soil, and the potatoes are of a very fine quality; they will fetch a good price at Cheltenham, or anywhere, on account of the quality. It is not all so, but it is mostly light soil on limestone, which is particularly suitable for potatoes.

2301. Have you considered generally the question of small holdings, and the advantage of them?—Yes, I have always taken a very great interest in small holdings ever since I have been at Minster Lovell.

2302. Do you consider that the success or failure of small holdings depends upon there being some special advantage in the land appropriated for the purpose, or would you expect them to be successful if it were merely ordinary land?—I can answer the question in this respect, that where the land in Minster Lovell is what we call stiff or heavy land, wheat land in fact, the people do not do as well, and the holdings do not let for so much money as the lighter land, because the potatoes do not grow so well, and they are not of such good quality; they are more liable to disease.

2303. I will put the question in this way: do you think that such success as has attended the small holdings in Minster Lovell has been due chiefly to the character of the land?—I think if I might put it in this way, that so far as my knowledge goes of Minster Lovell (I am speaking only of Minster Lovell), I should say that the fact of the land being so well adapted for potatoes makes it of the value it is; and is the cause of the consequent success of the small holdings in Minster Lovell. If it was not for the potatoes the land would not be of the value it is, because they could not pay their rent.

2304. How do they cultivate their land?—Do you mean by what kind of husbandry?

2305. Yes?—Partly by horse labour and partly by hand labour.

2306. Partly by the spade do you mean?—No, they do not use the spade; they dig with the fork. I will explain it to you. For instance, if a man has four acres he does not dig or plough the four acres, he only digs or ploughs two each year alternately; that is to say, he ploughs the two acres that are used for potatoes and roots. Then the next year that land comes in for corn; it does not come in for the plough, it is simply breast-ploughed. I will tell you what I mean by breast-ploughed. They wear a wooden plate on the breast, and use a flat-bladed plough with a handle, and they push it along before them and turn the land over. That is all that is needed for barley, because the land has been deeply ploughed before for other crops, and that is sufficient. But some men dig the whole of it. I have here a balance-sheet which a man gave me the other day, who is a freeholder, who digs the whole of it, if you would like to see it (*handing in the same*). I had great difficulty in getting it.

Sir *George Campbell.*

2307. He digs the whole of the four acres?—Yes; but he has a young man at home, a son, who helps him. Then you must remember that

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

that he does not require to dig the four acres every year; it is only two acres that require to be dug every year.

2308. What happens the other year?—He breast ploughs it. Say, that it is dug for potatoes: as he digs the potatoes up he digs the land all over and cleans it as he goes along; and when he plants the barley he breast ploughs it in.

2309. Then there is some kind of ploughing?—Some of them have a horse and plough it; but they do not require to plough it for barley; they do that with the breast plough; but those who have horses plough it in.

2310. It is done by men, and not by a horse, I mean?—Yes.

Chairman.

2311. Do some of the tenants keep horses of their own?—Yes; a great many of them keep horses of their own.

2312. Can they employ them wholly on their own holdings?—No.

2313. Do they lend them out for hire?—They plough for the other people who want ploughing done, if I may say so. If a man does not go to regular work he would dig it all himself; but if he has a good deal of work off and on, he would employ horse labour to plough these two acres. Masons, for instance, at home in winter when they are out of work will dig their holdings in the winter, and a great deal of their spare time will be occupied on their holdings; in fact, it is a great field for their spare hours.

2314. I take it that none of these people attempt to live entirely on their own holdings?—A man who pays rent cannot do so, but a man who is a freeholder, if he has not a family to bring up, can almost get a living out of a small holding; he would go out for a day occasionally thrashing, and so on.

2315. But have the majority extraneous sources of income?—Yes, some of them go to day labour on the farms, others cart stones; they do all sorts of things. Some of them are masons. They seem to find wonderful ways of finding out occupation for themselves and their horses.

2316. This balance-sheet which you have given me shows that the man pays rent, and has a balance of profit of 14 *l.* 10 *s.* upon a four-acre allotment?—Yes.

2317. In addition to that he has, of course, a free house?—Yes.

2318. And he has such portion of the produce as he can consume himself?—Yes.

2319. And altogether you reckon that as amounting to 6 *s.* per week?—Yes.

2320. If he paid no rent it would amount to 11 *s.* per week?—Yes; if it was his own holding, that is his own holding in that case; but I put it down as rent, as capital.

2321. But then he would have an expenditure of capital in purchasing the freehold?—Yes.

2322. But 6 *s* a week, of course, is not enough for the subsistence of a family?—No; certainly not.

2323. Therefore they must have other sources of income?—They have almost invariably other sources of income.

2324. Do they grow any fruit on these holdings?—There is only one man who grows fruit

Chairman—continued.

to any extent; a few of them have egg-plum trees; but only one man has fruit to any extent.

2325. And what stock do they keep?—About half-a-dozen of them have cows; but their principal stock is pigs.

2326. Why do they not keep cows?—Because they have not grass-land. Some of them keep cows on grass-land which they rent from me. I let them have all my land, and they have the grass-land, and others take grass-land elsewhere. They cannot keep cows on these holdings; if they do, they feed them on the side of the road.

2327. Do you consider that this experiment at Minster Lovell is a success or not?—That, of course, depends very much upon the way in which you look at it. I should say that if the times had kept good it would have been a great success; and that is proved by the fact that when I went there there was a great demand for them. If a man was likely to die or to give up his holding there were any number of people anxious for it, offering more rent; and they sold at a very high price. I remember, when I first went there, one case in which four acres and a house, which was a good deal dilapidated, sold for 320 *l.* or 330 *l.*, and was afterwards let to the man's own son-in-law for 17 *l.* 10 *s.* Therefore I consider them a success. But I do not consider them a success in this way: If you mean whether a man can get a living off four acres, it is not a success. The mistake was that the holdings were made too small for a man to get a living. But I should say that they are a success, because they are a great help to the men who hold them to get a better living for their families.

2328. You told us that one man held 11 acres put together?—Yes.

2329. Does he get a living out of them?—Fairly. I do not say that he would not do an odd job occasionally to oblige a neighbour; but generally he gets his living; and his rent is 30 *l.* for 11 acres, and with the tithe of 6 *s.* an acre.

2330. Therefore, if there were a sufficiency of land, a man could get a living even at these high rents and rates?—Yes, if they have sufficient land they can.

2331. And what do you think would be sufficient land, generally speaking?—I would not make it less than 10 acres. Almost all the men who have succeeded at Minster Lovell have been men who have got more than one holding.

2332. In your experience have you known men who came on as labourers or as tenants and have subsquently bought their holdings?—Yes; I will give you an instance, which a man told me the other day. I said to him, "What capital had you to begin with? I want to know, because I expect to be asked these questions by the Committee." He said, "You must not tell anybody, I was 5 *l.* in debt when I came here. I have now a holding of four acres of my own free, and no debt upon it."

2333. And he had secured that partly by his labour on the land and partly by his labour outside?—Yes. He is a man who has a horse, and he carts things to Witney, and does any jobs he can. He told me that he had nothing when he started. Another man, who was a tenant of mine, came and

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Chairman—continued.

offered me three guineas an acre for my land when I first went to my glebe, and he told me that he had only a few coppers when he began.

2334. What is the effect of this occupation upon the characters of the people?—They are a very industrious and very sober set of people, exceedingly so. The fact is, that we had a policeman there, who was removed, and the people asked him to speak to the chief constable, and replied that he removed him because there was no crime there. Minster Lovell is on the high road to Cheltenham. I applied to the chief constable, and he said he was not wanted and took him away. And I have asked the policemen about it, and they all say that it is an exceptional place; there is no dunkenness and no crime.

2335. Do you think that that is due to this experiment?—Yes, entirely so. The reason I say that is because I have both the village and the small holdings estate in my parish; they are separate, and there is no comparison between the sobriety of the small holdings estate and that of the village. The fact is that the small holdings' men want all their money to put into their concern; they know that every pound they put in will turn another pound; they want it for manure; they want it to put into stock. If a man has one breeding sow he will want two and three.

2336. Then, in a word, the possession of the land is a great stimulus to social and civil virtues?—Exactly so.

2337. Have you made any comparison between the tenants, who are simply tenants, and the owners who cannot be turned out?—I do not think you can draw much distinction between them. If the land is a man's own of course he will put more into it, he has more inducement to improve it. But there are some men who do the land splendidly; they have it in them whether they are owners or tenants, they will do it well. I have my land let to them, and my land is kept like a garden.

2338. If you were carrying out an experiment of the kind yourself would you be satisfied to create small tenancies, or would you desire to create small ownerships?—I should prefer to create small ownerships decidedly. I would much rather do it by rent-charge; there is no doubt about it. I could tell you the reason if you like.

2339. If you please?—The reason would be this: I considered the question when I went to Minster Lovell whether it would answer my purpose to make my glebe into small holdings. I have only 33 acres. I found that there were two or three ecclesiastical reasons against it; I should be liable to heavy dilapidations for one thing. If a man holds his own house he would put a nail in it where it was wanted at once here and there, but if he holds under a landlord he is apt to let the thing go more to ruin; therefore, I should fear that by letting my glebe in that way I should be subject to very serious yearly repairs. For instance, one of the largest holders of these holdings told me that it cost him 2 *l.* a a year on the average for repair of each cottage. But if they are their own they will take care of them. I should be very glad to let my land

Chairman—continued.

subject to a rent-charge, but I would not build on these small holdings.

2340. Do these men cultivate the land well?—Yes, very well.

2341. Have they much capital engaged?—No, very little.

2342. They are all poor, are they?—Some come with capital, but the majority have come there with next to nothing.

2343. But have they borrowed money on their holdings?—Yes; it is a marvellous thing how these men can get money lent them and be trusted. For instance, I asked this man who came with 5 *l.* in debt, "How did you manage to get along at all," and he said, "Why they trusted me at the mill for 50 *l.* for meal for my pigs"; and manufacturers and people about, if they know them, will lend them money, they have such confidence in them. In that way a man comes with nothing, or perhaps very little, and if they know him they trust him.

2344. Do they pay off their debts, or do they remain burdened?—The people who borrow money pay it off.

2345. Are those who have been there some time free from debt?—Do you mean are the holdings free from mortgage?

2346. Yes?—A good many of the holdings have mortgages on them, large or small; they cannot pay them off now, they could formerly.

2347. What have they raised the money for?—To cultivate their holdings with. If they go there with nothing they must have some money to buy pigs and get along the first year.

2348. And they have not been able to pay that off?—Yes, they will pay that off; but I am speaking now of the mortgages, when they buy them subject to mortgages. They would pay off the few, say 20 *l.*, or 10 *l.*, or 5 *l.*, that they borrowed to cultivate the land with, but if they bought the holding with a mortgage they would not perhaps be able to pay that off.

2349. That is supposing they bought the whole freehold?—Yes, with a mortgage; of course they could pay it off in the good times, because these men have done it, but they cannot do so now.

2350. I suppose that the only case in which there would be a heavy mortgage on the land would be where the occupier has bought the freehold out-and-out?—Yes.

2351. And in that case the mortgage may have to remain owing to bad times?—Yes. I think there is one point that I should explain perhaps, that a man cannot redeem his land from the rent-charge unless the person who has the rent-charge is willing to let him redeem it.

2352. But some of them have redeemed, as I understand?—Yes, some have redeemed at a very great reduction in value. There was one of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* redeemed at 112 *l.* 10 *s.* The owner was emigrating, and wanted the money.

2353. In the case of these men who take work outside, besides cultivating their own land, how are they employed?—Several of them are masons; several of them go to agricultural work.

2354. Does the work of their own farms interfere with their work for others?—No, the remarkable thing is, that the farmer who has the

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Chairman—continued.

the farm adjoining the small holdings estate has told me over and over again that he never had better workmen in his life than the men from the adjoining small holdings.

2355. Then it is no disadvantage to the adjoining farms?—No. This man told me that he had never had better men in his life; and I can give you the reason. I have been astonished at the speed at which these men work, as compared with the ordinary agricultural labourer. I said, to one of them who has worked for me, "How is it you work so splendidly? You do too much work," and he said, "We get into this way in working for ourselves, and then we cannot stop it." And then they are better fed; they are better conditioned altogether.

2356. What sort of houses are put on the land?—Their houses are like this: they have three rooms in front, with an entrance in the middle, that is the kitchen in the middle, and one on either side is a room which may be used for a bed-room or a sitting-room, there is a back kitchen behind; and the rest of the space filling up the house to make a square is divided into two parts, one of which is meant for a stable (it was meant by Fergus O'Connor for a stable, but it is not very proper for a stable), and the other is a little out-house.

2357. Is it all on one floor?—Yes. One or two have got upstairs now, but originally they were all on one floor with three rooms in front; they are very nice cottages.

2358. And there is a cottage on each separate holding?—Each holding has a cottage; and some have a stable and some times other buildings, and then of course the holdings are more valuable.

2359. Do you think that it is a necessary part of the system to have a cottage on each holding?—Yes, it is a most important thing. The men say so to me about my land. I say to them, "It is all very well; you give me 30 *s.* an acre for my land, and you are paying 2 *l.* 10 *s.* for your holdings," and they say, "But ours is worth double the money, because the house is on it"; and that is the great drawback of the so-called allotments compared with our holdings. A man goes home to his dinner, and he can get out on the land, and look to his pigs, and in the evening he has no distance to walk, everything is close at home; both the wife and family, and the land; and that makes them more valuable. In fact holdings away from the houses are not of half the value.

2360. How is this land situated with regard to markets?—It is three miles from Witney, but you can hardly call Witney a market, because very little is sold there; it is 15 miles from Oxford, 25 miles from Cheltenham, and three from Witney, which is the nearest railway station.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

2361. Is it near Fairford?—No, it is a long way from Fairford.

2362. What is the effect of these small holdings upon the question of pauperism?—It is the cure of pauperism I should say. I have gone through that very carefully, and can tell you what the facts are. We have one old woman of 91 whose husband years ago had a small holding, and she never received parish relief till she was 80 years of age, although she was a widow. We have only one other person a girl, in the union from that estate; she had been living with her grandmother, and came home rather queer in her mind and silly. I could not keep her in an institution; I got her into one, but they sent her back because she went on in such a silly way, and we had to put her in the union. Those are the only two cases off that estate at the present time.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

2363. I think you have said that they are an intelligent lot of men?—Yes, they are a very intelligent lot of men. If they were not intelligent, and a better class of men, they could not do there; it sharpens their wits tremendously; they are a very sharp wide-awake people.

2364. Of course it increases the population; that is retained on the land?—Yes, I went very carefully through the population, and I found that the population of Old Minster, that is to say, without the small holding estate, was 200; and there are 300 on that small holding of 250 acres. But then I allow for 50, supposing that they had been on a farm; that is to say, supposing that it had been a farm of 250 acres instead of small holdings, there would be 50; but probably there would not be more than four men employed on the farm, and that leaves an increase in the population of 250 in our parish. I might say that the acreage of our population is 1,938 acres; that includes the roads, waste, and water; and in that parish we have a population of 511 by the last census, and I believe myself that if it was an ordinary parish we should not have any more than 250 to 300 people at the outside.

2365. I think your experience as well as your inquiries into the subject lead you to be favourable to the creation of small holdings?—Yes, certainly.

2366. Have you considered the objections which are taken to them?—Do you mean to our small holdings, or to small holdings generally?

2367. I mean to small holdings generally?—I do not know that there are any objections to them.

2368. I think you have followed the proceedings before the Royal Commission on Agriculture; have you read Mr. Doyle's evidence?—Yes, I have read his evidence; he made some objections to the system I remember. One was that in a country like this with so large a population, it was ridiculous to create holdings in which people would consume their own produce.

2369. Do you know what his views were on that point?—He did not give any reason for it at all; I do not remember the statements with regard to it. But that was as much as to say that you want the land to produce food for the people at large, and not for the individuals who occupy it.

2370. But if the land does not now produce enough even for the people who cultivate it I do not see how it would be a disadvantage that they should consume their own produce, and find enough to consume?—They can consume their own

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

own produce and can produce more than the large farms.

2371. As a matter of fact the small holders in Minster Lovell produce more than enough for their own consumption?—Certainly, very largely more.

2372. Do you think that they put more capital in the shape of labour and manure into the land than big farmers?—Certainly, more than the tenant farmers. There is an immense amount of labour put into these small holdings. Think of the quantity of digging that it takes; and they keep it so clean; and there is all that hand-working. You do not see the squitch and stuff on those holdings that you see in the farms about that neighbourhood. I have some very good farmers in my parish, because they are large proprietors with plenty of money; but the tenant farmers have gone to the wall one after another.

2373. But then there must be a great number of articles grown which are not produced of course on the farms?—Yes.

2374. And which this increased population must attain from the manufacturing districts?—Yes.

2375. I mean their clothes and instruments, and such things, and such articles of food as are not grown on the farm?—Yes. Of course there is all their clothing, their grocery, and their coals. An immense quantity of coals goes up there, because they want it for boiling up the food for their pigs. Then they buy an immense amount of meal from the millers, because they cannot grow enough always to feed their pigs with.

2376. You have about 300 people upon this estate?—Yes.

2377. Where otherwise there would only be 30 or 40 at the outside?—I like to put it high. I put it at 50 at the most.

2378. Where otherwise there would not be more than 50; and those additional members of the community have all their goods made and sold in the towns, and in the surrounding district?—Yes; and it makes a very large trade for the district, because you understand these men, many of them, have large families.

2379. Are there any special lessons to be derived from the Minster Lovell estate, which you would wish to impress upon the Committee?—In the first place, I would say that one of the great advantages of these small holdings is, that they give employment to the men who go to work more or less for all their spare time.

2380. I am talking rather of suggestions, with regard to the creation of small holdings which you would base upon your experience in Minster Lovell. For instance, as regards the proportion of land to be attributed to each house, I think your opinion is, that the holdings are too small at Minster Lovell?—Yes; certainly they are too small. The objections to the holdings in Minster Lovell are, that four acres is too small a holding for a man to get a living out of without other work.

2381. I think your opinion is that the holdings should not be less than from 10 to 20 acres to each cottage?—Yes, quite so.

2382. Do you think that there ought to be pasture attached?—Yes, it is very desirable to

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

have pasture; and I will explain to you why. There is this man who came and offered me three guineas per acre for my land, the farmers give me 33 *s.*; but I let him have it. We had a tremendous potato disease there, about the year 1880 or 1881; and I said to the man, "How in the world did you manage to get on during the potato disease," he had several allotments besides my land; and he said, "If it had not been for your grass land and the cows, I could not have paid your rent." You must not in agriculture of any kind, especially with small holdings, depend entirely upon one crop. That is just where they get nailed in Minster Lovell occasionally. For instance, after that year of the tremendous run of the potato disease it brought the people down very low. But how do you think they managed; they are men of great resources. I asked one man how he managed. He said, "I have made 40 *l.* a year by my holding for several years." I said, "How did you do during the year of that tremendous potato disease?" "Oh," he said, "I boiled up my potatoes; I bought a lot of barley meal and a lot of pigs, and I fed the pigs with the meal, and I made all that money." But you ought not to be dependent on one thing, and I am strongly in favour of the pasture, because a cow is a very great advantage to them.

2383. I want to continue your recommendations; I think that you are of opinion that there should not be too many of these holdings in any one parish?—I am. You will understand that in a small parish of 1,900 acres like Minster Lovell 250 additional people for extra work is too many. Then also in selling things in the neighbourhood, it makes so much competition. For instance, the way in which the small holders make things pay is this, that they grow choice crops. A man will grow a lot of early peas and take them into the town and sell them at a price for household purposes; but if there are a great number of people growing these special crops the competition becomes too great. And Witney is well supplied with gardens. I think that 80 holdings is too many for Minster Lovell. And my opinion is, and has been for years, that it would be an exceedingly good thing for every parish if there could be a certain number of small holdings in every parish. I will explain why. In every parish there are men among the agricultural labourers of superior brains and energy; these men want to do something better; they do not like having only 10 *s.* a week, which are the wages there all the year round, and house-rent to pay; and they often come to me to get them into other employments, the railway or the police force, or the shops in the towns.

2384. Your idea, I think is, that if they had an opportunity of getting small holdings they would be more likely to remain in the country?—There is no doubt about it. There is no prospect before them but the workhouse; these agricultural labourers have no hope but the workhouse.

2385. What tenure do you suggest for these small holdings?—My experience in Minster Lovell leads me to be very favourable to the rent-charge system, because on the rent-charge system

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

system a man with some capital can manage. It is very difficult for the men to save, although I know a man, an agricultural labourer, who had saved 300 *l.*; but if a man can get 100 *l.* or 50 *l.* capital the rent-charge system is very much better in my opinion.

2386. Have you had any experience of larger holdings, say from 20 to 50 acres?—Yes, in various parishes, I have; and in Minster Lovell we have five holdings varyings from 20 to 47 acres.

2387. Can you give us a description of any one of these holdings?—Yes, I will.

2388. Would you take the one with 47 acres?—Here is the case of one man who has 47 acres; 8½ acres of that is his own with a house on it, freehold. He has a good proportion of grass lands, and has cows, and makes butter, and eggs, and has pigs, and he does very well. He is the man who always said to me that in these bad times small holders could hold their own, and that it was the big men who went to the wall.

2389. I do not think I need trouble you with other examples; but do you find this class of small holdings successful?—Yes.

2390. In these cases do the men get their whole subsistance from the land?—These men who have the larger holdings do. I will give you an instance of one of the men who has land of my own; he is an old man and has two sons, who are active young men; they have sixteen acres of mine, and three of those are grass land; and then they have about sixteen acres in these small holdings. They have four small holdings with sixteen acres of mine.

2391. That makes 32 acres altogether?—I think I have made a mistake there in the size of one of the holdings, but it is very immaterial.

2392. In this case there are three families?—Yes.

2393. The man and his two sons and their families?—Yes, they both have families.

2394. Are they all living on those 32 acres?—Yes, they are all living on those 32 acres; and mind you, they have been living on less; they have only lately taken the extra eight acres, because the families were so increasing that they wanted more land, and therefore they took this extra land for a larger living; and they have two cows.

2395. And are they doing fairly well?—They are looked upon as prosperous men. For instance, since they have had my land they have been able to buy horses and cows, and to set up a good spring cart and go to Oxford. But then the people say that the principal advantage is in having my land at 30 *s.* an acre, as compared with the others; but that shows what they can do.

2396. And I think you told us that the larger farmers of the district have been doing very badly?—Yes, they have being doing badly. The whole time I have been at Minster Lovell, I only remember one of these men being distrained upon for rent; and he was not a very satisfactory man.

2397. I would just ask you whether you think it desirable that the State should do anything to

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

increase the facilities to create small holdings?—Yes, I think it would be a very good thing to do so.

2398. Have you considered what form State assistance should take?—I have never thought that out in any form myself; but, of course, I know what the proposition is of Mr. Collings' Bill.

2399. Have you studied Mr. Collings' Bill?—I have not studied the Bill, but Mr. Collings has kindly given me the particulars of the Bill for advancing part of the purchase-money.

2400. Three-fourths of the purchase-money is proposed to be advanced?—Yes.

2401. Do you approve of that proposal?—I think it would be a very good plan; it would be a great help. So many of these men, the better men, feel that there is no hope for them, and they all push away from the country villages; and that would be a prospect for them.

2402. Do you think that many people would take advantage of such facilities if they were offered?—I do not think that a great number of agricultural labourers could save money at 10 *s.* a week; but then they are always getting money in various ways. It is very curious, but they appear to do so; and these people who have got money would be very glad, no doubt, to buy land. And there is a great demand for land in our neighbourhood.

2403. You know that the proposal in the Bill which Mr. Collings has prepared is that the local authority, that is the County Council or District Council, or some similar body, should purchase land and divide it into small holdings, and then should let it to these people upon the terms that they are to have a perpetual occupation of it, finding one-fourth of the purchase-money, and paying interest upon three-fourths?—Yes.

2404. Do you think that that would involve any risk to the local authority?—No, none whatever.

2405. You think that they would not make any bad debts?—No. Take the rent-charge in Minster Lovell, they are always paid. There is a proof of it. I never heard of a man being turned out of his place, because he could not pay the rent-charge in the 16 years that I have been there; and that is much more than this would be. I think that land ought to be bought at 25 *l.* an acre, tithe-rent free; then four acres would be 100 *l*, and we should get eight acres for 200 *l.* Look what an advantage that would be compared with what they get at Minster Lovell.

2406. Always supposing that the land was equally suitable?—Yes. It is a very important thing to have suitable land for small holdings. Stiff land would ruin a man.

2407. Would you object to trust the local authorities with these powers?—No, I do not think so. I should not object to it at all. I think they could be trusted. The only thing I should be afraid of would be whether they would take the trouble to carry it out. I think they would, because, of course, since the people have been given votes for the County Council that has made an immense difference in the interests which the County Council take in the people

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

whose votes they want; they are going in for allotments in order to get the peoples' votes. I think that has altered the position very much.

2408. I should like to ask you whether you know the principle of the Ashbourne Act in Ireland. About advancing-money to the tenant?—Yes.

2409. You know that in the Ashbourne Act the whole of the purchase money is advanced by the State?—Yes.

2409.* Then the tenant is charged with a yearly sum, which is sufficient to cover the interest and the repayment?—I quite understand.

2410. So that in the course of 50 years the tenant becomes absolute owner, without having to make any further payment whatever?—Yes.

2411. In Mr. Collings' proposal, the tenant pays one-fourth down, and as to the remaining three-fourths he takes a perpetual loan, and he never becomes the absolutely unembarrased owner?—No.

2412. I wish to ask you whether you have considered which of those two plans is the better one?—I have not considered that, and questions of that kind; one cannot answer off-hand. I should myself be inclined to prefer the power to pay it off, to tell you the truth; I think it would be a stimulus; but the objection to it would be this, as regards doing it by the State, I mean that the holdings would become let; that is to say, men would get them as private property and would let them at exorbitant rents.

2413. Your fear is that if the tenant becomes absolute owner, the next thing he will do is to become a landlord?—Yes.

2414. And have tenants under him to whom he will let the rents at exorbitant rents?—Yes, these small men always exact the highest rent.

2415. The smallest owner is always the most exacting landlord?—Yes, the most exacting and hardest.

2416. Therefore in order to maintain the land for its original purpose, and for the establishment of small holdings at fair rents, you would like to keep a certain control over the owners?—Yes. If they were purchased by the State I should prefer it. I think that Minster Lovell is a great example of that. These holdings fall into the hands of small investors. A man in a small shop in Witney who has saved 300*l.* does not know how to invest it; he goes and buys a small holding in Minster Lovell; then he wants interest for his money, and so the rents are run up.

2417. Would you propose to make any provisions in order to prevent sub-letting?—I should be very strict about that. I should certainly restrict it to the cultivator always.

2418. You would not allow any sub-letting?—No, if a man could not cultivate it, he ought to sell it, and get the advantage of it.

Viscount *Curzon.*

2419. Do you think that there is any tendency now on the part of landowners to let their land in large farms?—I think myself now that they would be glad to let it in any way they can. There was a time when all the small holdings were thrown into large farms, and a man occupied two or three farms; but now I think landlords would be very glad to let them in any way they can.

Viscount *Curzon*—continued.

2420. In your neighbourhood is there any difficulty for those people who wish to become the owners or tenants of a small holding, in getting that land from the landowner now?—Yes, there is a difficulty in getting land for small holdings.

2421. In your opinion the landlords are not too willing to let their land in small holdings?—No, not in small holdings, I do not think they are.

2422. Therefore you think that some legislation is necessary in order to create and facilitate the creation of these small holdings?—I do not think it will be done without legislation. And I will tell you why: because as soon as a man begins to build houses, the architects and others fleece the gentry immensely. It is not like a man doing it. If I was going to build a house it would not cost me half what it would cost you; because you would employ an expensive architect, and I should employ a man in the place at half the money.

2423. Will you tell me how many acres you think, to strike an average, would be sufficient to support a man and his family; what would be the best size of small holding do you think?—I could not say how many acres would be the best size; I should say from 10 acres upwards. I will tell you why I cannot say exactly: there are no two men alike. One man has a family of sons, and he can do with a lot of land as soon as his sons are useful. Another man might have a family of girls. One man might have more capital than another. I should not have less than 10 acres. My experience is that a man cannot get a living out of less then 10 acres, without going to work. I should make them from 10 to 40 or 50 acres. I think that when men get more than 50 acres they are worse than large farms; they try to do with less labour and they cannot.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

2424. You were speaking of the capacity of the small holder to maintain his house in repair, on the principle of a stitch in time?—Yes; I do not think that the small holders who rent, as a rule, take the same trouble to keep their house in repair that a man would if it was his own. I do not mean to say that they let them go to ruin; but I have gone into a house sometimes and seen a screw out of a hinge, or, perhaps, a door off its hinges, and banging. Now if the house were the man's own he would put the screw in, if he did not, it might bang on and break the door, perhaps. But there is a great difference in 60 men. Some men would keep their house like a palace. But my objection to having to build houses, if I were to let my land in small holdings, would be that they would have to be very costly in proportion, or the expenses would be very heavy in repairs.

2425. And the class of men like those on the estate you referred to are very handy men, you say?—Yes.

2426. They

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

2426. They can put up a pig-stye themselves, for instance?—Yes, there are several of them who are a sort of half masons; they begin as mason's labourers, and then they get to be very handy.

2427. Are they wallers?—Yes, they do walling; and they are very handy in doing things themselves. I do not mean to say that they carpenter and that sort of thing; but a good many of the men on the place can do odd jobs and put up things. I have a man who offered to do my house as a mason.

2428. So that you could not count the cost of cottage building then on the same principle as a large landowner counts the cost of cottage building on a farm?—No, I know that for a fact, if I were to build cottages, I should have a large architect's bill, and a big builder's bill, and a lot of expenses which would not be necessary; our local masons would put up a nice cottage for 100 *l.* that would cost you, perhaps, 150 *l.* or 200 *l.*

2429. You place great importance and value upon a house being with the holding?—That is very important.

2430. That is because it enables the live stock and the crops to get constant attention at the particular moment when they require attention rather than at regulated or irregular hours?—Yes; the house being on the holding is everything. My tenants have said that it is the buildings that are so valuable to them in attending to the pigs and other things; by having them on the spot in odd minutes they can do that, and hoeing or other odd jobs.

2431. Then your little community is a superior community to anything surrounding them?—I think so, in moral character and behaviour, and everything. And they are intellectually a finer class of men than the ordinary class of agricultural labourers.

2432. That naturally arises from the possession of property, does it?—No, not altogether. They are superior men in themselves, or they would not be there. It is the better class of men who push their way in life in every rank and profession; and these men who have energies and desires for something better go to that estate.

2433. But when they are there this holding acts as an education?—Yes, I think it does; it sharpens their wits, and makes them altogether better.

2434. Now about the small labourer. You said that the ordinary labourer at 10 *s.* or 12 *s.* a week has no prospect but the workhouse?—I said a man at 10 *s.* a week, not 12 *s.*; our men have 10 *s.* a week, and no free cottage, and they have no prospect but the workhouse or parish relief when they get old.

2435. But if there was a system of providing small holdings you think it would be a stimulus to that class of labourers?—I think it would to save money.

2436. And in that case would you come down, in order to give him a start in life, to two acres or one acre, that he and his family might cultivate at their leisure time?—You see a man begins with an allotment generally, or a piece

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

of land of about an acre, and works his way up in that way. A man first of all gets a quarter of an acre, and then half-an-acre, then he gets some pigs, and makes his way in that manner, gradually. It is not to be supposed that men in every case step into these things at once; there are gradual steps.

2437. They go from poultry to pigs?—Yes. In the case of a man who is going to be a future small holder, if you go to his place you find that he has saved a little money, and got a pig.

2438. But the point is this: there is a reluctance, you say, on the part of some landowners to let the land in this way?—Yes.

2439. Then any scheme of compulsion in order to give equal facilities to the poorest labourer to commence the first rung of the ladder should come down to something less than 10 acres?—Yes; but is not that provided for in the Allotments Act already. I thought that now already there was a Bill introduced to compel the local authority to provide allotments for the people.

2440. Yes, but that is limited in extent. What I mean is, would you prefer a scale, say any quantity from 10 acres down to one acre; so that men in different positions and of different acquirements might have a holding suitable to their family wants, and their ability to manage?—Do you mean to put a house or buildings on it?

2441. Yes, if necessary?—I think that that plan would be excellent if it could be carried out. But the great difficulty is the expense of buildings in proportion to the size of the ground. What I should like to have seen instead of the Government Bill, would be not to give people allotments half a mile or a quarter of a mile away from their homes, but to insist that wherever it was feasible, every cottage should have its land or garden enlarged, or land close to the houses, this is a most important thing.

2442. In other words, that no cottage should be erected except on an allotment, or having an allotment attached to it?—No, that would not exactly do. There are numbers of men who would not have the energy and go, to do more than their garden. If you made it the law for every cottage to have a large piece of land, numbers of men would not care to have it. But I quite see the difficulty between you and myself. If for instance, the allotment could be made close to the village, or the garden enlarged where feasible, or allotments made at the back, so that a man could come through, if he could not cultivate it, his next neighbour would be glad to have it. But I think myself that the expense of buildings would be too great to build houses on anything under 10 acres.

2443. Do the community with which you are acquainted take their garden produce into Oxford?—They take their potatoes into Oxford. It is not market gardening at Minster Lovel, it is principally potatoes, barley, wheat, and roots, carrots, and those things; they do not take much into Oxford, but they do take potatoes principally into Oxford I know. It may be a useful thing to mention to the Committee, that the want in these agricultural labourers is that

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

they have not been brought up to gardening, they do not understand it. Some of them do; but, as a rule, they do not understand market gardening.

2444. They do not grow fruit on these small holdings?—They have a few plum trees, but the estate is on a kind of plateau; it is just at the beginning of the Cotswold Hills, and is very high land exposed to all the winds. There is only one man whose landlord has planted a great quantity of fruit trees, and he is very successful. But if all the men had fruit they could not sell it in that neighbourhood. That man does very well, because his brother-in-law takes the fruit to Oxford for him, and gets a tip-top price, the shop price for it. If you mean, should a man have facility for buying an acre of land with Government assistance to build a house himself on it, it might be a different question, if that is what you mean?

2445. No. Do you know whether that is a strawberry growing country between Oxford and your place?—They do not grow strawberries with us.

2446. Do you know the neighbourhood between Oxford and this place?—I do not know it. I have seen the land where they grow strawberries at Droitwich, Archdeacon Lee's land. That is very superior land to ours. Ours is light land mostly.

2447. Do you find any difficulty in the education question with the children of these people?—No. They are a bright set of children generally.

2448. And they send their children to school regularly?—Very regularly. We have a splendid attendance.

2449. Do the children show superior intelligence generally to the children of the agricultural day labourer?—It is very difficult to answer that question; but I am inclined to think that they are a more intelligent set.

2450. You, as a clergyman, having experience of rural life, would view with great favour a large increase on the system of holdings that you have in your neighbourhood?—I would not be inclined to encourage a small holding estate like that of Minster Lovell, because the holdings are too small.

2451. But generally you are in favour of an increase in those interested in the land?—I think it would be a very good thing for the labouring class; it would keep them in the country and give them a prospect in every way.

2452. Do you think it would be a good thing nationally, for the State?—It would be a good thing in this way: that it would keep more people in the country, and I think there would be more produced on the land.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

2453. Some of the tenants of these small holdings have ponies or horses I suppose?—Yes, horses mostly, not ponies; one or two may have ponies.

2454. How do they manage in the winter with regard to feeding them. I take it that they are not able to make any hay, there is no pasture you say?—No.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

2455. Are there any common lands adjacent where they can turn these horses or ponies out?—There are no common lands. There is a good deal of grass by the roadside, and some of them take their horses, and their cows occasionally along the roads; some of those have no grass land, but they grow part of the stuff on the land for their horses, and they buy part. I saw a man the other day, who has a horse, going with a truss of hay that he bought from a farmer. They grow fodder crops and vetches and lucerne, and a little clover. Then they use roots partly in feeding. Perhaps they may grow a few oats.

2456. And are the sheds and other buildings all put up by themselves?—No.

2457. I understood you to say so?—No, the landlord is supposed to do it.

2458. They are all put up by the landlord?—Generally speaking. Originally there were only pigstyes; but when any buildings are put up, they are put up by the landlord. There may be an agreement with the tenant that he is to cart the stones or do part of the building.

2459. Who makes the repairs, is that all done by the tenant?—Generally by the landlord.

2460. And he provides the rough material?—In the case of buildings it would be just the same sort of thing as a farm. A man would say, "I want a new shed," then you make an agreement with him as to how it is to be put up. Either the landlord does it and charges a per-centage, or they do it jointly. One perhaps digs the stones, or carts the stones, or gets the stone on the land; it is on stone brash. A man says, "I will get the stone, sir, and do the carting if you will pay for the mason's work."

2461. What do you think would be the annual value of the cottages without the land?—What will they let at, do you mean?

2462. Yes?—If they are let they are let for three pounds; but you could not build them for that. They cost Fergus O'Connor, when they were built, 120 *l.*; but there was a great deal of swindling about it. Some masons on the place say they could build them for 80 *l.*; but if you build a cottage for 100 *l.* you want 6 per cent. for it; but they only let for 3 *l.*, because that is the price of cottages in the neighbourhood.

2463. Have you railway facilities in the neighbourhood?—Nothing nearer than Witney, which is three miles.

2464. Do you not think that these tenants could extend fruit cultivation and send the produce by railway to Oxford and other large towns?—They have not the education for it; ey do not understand it.

2465. But surely they understand ordinary garden cultivation?—There is one very intelligent man, who has been an agricultural labourer, who has got a lot of fruit trees and doing very well with them; but they do not understand pruning and that sort of thing, and there is no immediate neighbourhood where they find they could get a sale for any quantity of fruit.

2466. Have you not in Oxfordshire cottage garden shows in summer, or early in autumn, at which cottage garden produce is exhibited as in other counties?—We used to have that in Surrey

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

Surrey but we have not in Oxfordshire. We used to have a show at Witney; I think that is dropped now.

2467. Surely your experience in other counties points to the fact that these cottagers very often beat the gardeners of gentlemen's houses?—They did when I was in Surrey. There were splendid gardens there and splendid gardeners; but these people are not much of gardeners in this neighbourhood. I cannot answer questions as to whether the tenants would go to the expense of putting in fruit trees themselves, and the question is whether the landlord would do it. I do not think, myself, that fruit is a certain thing for paying now; there is a doubt about fruit, I think.

2468. I think you said that the ordinary wages were 10*s.* a week. What do they receive for harvest?—They receive very little indeed for harvest now. They say now that when they do extra work, such as hoeing, they do not make much more than a day's wages at it, and very little is done at harvest: it is done with a reaper and a tying-up machine, and they do not get much out of it.

2469. Surely they get double the ordinary wages during harvest?—No, I do not think they do now. A few years ago a family would make from 6*l.* to 9*l.* in harvest, and they say now that they do not make a couple of pounds at harvest.

2470. And there is very little piece-work done?—There is a certain amount of hoeing; but in Oxfordshire all piece-work is very low.

Mr. *Lowther.*

2471. Your soil is suitable at Minster Lovell for cultivation by small holders?—Yes, it is, certainly, the greater part of it.

2472. And your climate is suitable?—The climate has this drawback, that it is very high land; it is a plateau on the top of high hills, and is exposed to all winds, which partly militates against growing fruit. The land is particularly suitable for potatoes and for barley; it is not generally deep enough for wheat striking down deep, but the barley spreading out a flat root does very well. But one of the great things with regard to the land is, you can go and dig and plough it almost as soon as it has done raining.

2473. Your markets are suitable?—We are badly off for markets; we are 15 miles from Oxford.

2474. You are only three miles from a railway?—Yes; but think of the expense of carting things to Witney, and sending things on to Oxford from a branch line. People going to Oxford invariably cart there direct.

2475. And you say that the class of people who cultivate these holdings is rather superior?—On the whole. Among 60 people there is a good deal of difference, of course.

2476. And you say you have no drunkenness?—No drunkenness. It is a most rare thing to see a man the worse for drink. For many years past I think that the only time when I saw a man coming home the worse for drink was at the time of the election.

2477. And you have no crime?—No.

Mr. *Lowther*—continued.

2478. And no pauperism?—No, only those two cases I told you. You will, perhaps, wonder how that is, because these men cannot save much now; you would think that when these men could not work their allotments they must go to the union. In fact that was one of the cases made out against the O'Connor estate at that time before Parliament that these people would always be chargeable to the union.

2479. What does happen to them?—I think they have great independence of character; they are most independent people, and they would do anything rather than go to the union. But I think that when a man has one of these small holdings, though he begins with nothing, he accumulates a capital by way of interest in the land, his stock of pigs, horses, and cows, and that passes on to his children; the father working on with them as long as he lives. It is a remarkable thing that that is all the pauperism we have. Then I think that the children will often help their parents more than they would if they were agricultural labourers. For instance, the other day (this is a positive fact), a man who was very old, and had been ill for two or three years, who had been there 27 years, made over all his pigs, horse, and other things to his son, who had some land in another parish, on the condition that he kept him and his wife as long as he lived.

2480. He defeated the Chancellor of the Exchequer?—Well, it was worth about 60*l.*

2481. I suppose these people have their faults; they are not perfect?—Certainly not; they have their faults, certainly. They drive a hard bargain, and they will best you, if they can, if you drive a bargain with them. But taking the men for their position in life, they are an exceedingly respectable class; and they are exceedingly independent. Some people think that a fault, I do not; they are their own masters.

2482. And they have to work very hard?—Yes; but that is not all the year round. Their wives work as well. A man, with a small holding, depends very much upon an industrious wife; with a delicate wife he cannot do on a small holding.

2483. Do the women work much on the land?—No, they principally attend to the pigs, and that sort of thing. I have seen one or two women digging.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

2484. You say that you have two paupers in in the workhouse?—Yes.

2485. Have you no out-door relief?—Not among the people we have; there is one old woman 91 years of age.

2486. In the whole parish?—No.

2487. Are you speaking only of those upon this estate?—Yes, we have relief in the parish for several.

2488. What does your poor rate run to?—Our poor rate for the whole district?

2489. Yes?—Yes; Two nine-pences and two eight-pences. It would be from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* in the £. per annum for the whole distict.

2490. Do you mean that the wages of these people are only 10*s.* a week?—Yes.

2491. And no cottage?—And no cottage; but

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Mr. *Lewellyn*—continued.

but cottages are very cheap; they pay about 1 *s.* 3 *d.* to 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a week according to the size of the garden.

2492. What size do the farms run about?—From 250 to 300 acres.

2493. I suppose the farmers who own their land are rather big men in their way?—Yes. There is one proprietor, who is a gentleman farmer; the property is his own; he has two farms of 549 acres.

2494. It is all ploughed land, is it not, corn land?—That is on the other side of the water; it is rather different land from the small holdings.

2495. I am speaking of the large farmers?—There is one large farm on the same side of the river adjoining these small holdings.

2496. These men only pay 10 *s.* a week to their labourers?—Yes. When I first went to Oxfordshire it was only 9 *s.* in winter, and 10 *s.* in summer.

2497. Has it improved lately, or the reverse?—It has improved; wages are better now; but there are not so many people employed as there used to be.

2498. I think you gave it as your opinion just now that a man could not be expected to do well on a small holding of his own under 10 or 12 acres, that he could not get a living?—Not without doing other things.

2499. You think that he could on a holding of 10 or 12 acres?—Yes, I think he could at Minster Lovell.

2500. Which do you think would be better off; a man who had a holding such as that of 15 to 20 acres, or a man who had regular wages from a farmer, and filled up his time with an allotment of say an acre?—That is a very difficult question to answer. I think that the men would rather have a larger holding themselves.

2501. But which would be better for them and their children, for the amount of money coming into the house I mean to say?—You see four acres is commonly said to be too much for a man to cultivate and go to regular daily labour.

2502. I am putting it at an acre?—I think that an industrious man, a good sort of man, would do better with say 12 acres at fair rent.

2503. Specially with such wages as you have got about you?—Yes.

2504. They are exceptionally low, are they not?—Yes. I think that where men get 15 *s.* a week, they might be better off; we are exceptionally low in Oxfordshire.

2505. You say that they make a good deal of money by pigs?—Yes.

2506. How do they make money by pigs?—The man whose balance sheet I gave the honourable Chairman has four acres, and he consumes everything with his pigs except what he uses himself.

2507. That was in the bad years you mean?—No, that was last year. He says, "I sell nothing but potatoes. I consume all my barley for my pigs. I consume all the wheat we do not use in the house. The only thing I sold besides last year was 30 *s.* worth of carrots," and these people consumed their stuff and buy into the bargain for their pigs.

Mr. *Lewellyn*—continued.

2508. What do they feed the pigs on?—They buy barley meal.

2509. What do they give for that?—They give the ordinary price; they are sharp enough; they will not give too much.

2510. Have they ever had it proposed to them to have a co-operative store for the purpose of grinding their own meal on that estate?—I never heard of it. I do not think it would answer.

2511. Not a small company for the purpose of starting a small engine and grinder?—I never thought of that, and I do not think it would answer; and I will tell you why, because these men all more or less want credit.

2512. Do they fat their pigs?—Yes. Then they buy the stuff, and pay when they have sold their pigs.

2513. Then the miller is rather a prosperous man?—No. I do not think they are now. The millers are doing very fairly well. We have a miller in the parish, but they get it, the meal, from all round; people are very anxious to do business with them. They come round from Burford and Witney, and other places, and ask these men to buy and trust them.

2514. That is a great help to them if they can find tradesmen to trust them?—Yes.

2515. Do the farmers object to employing these men who hold four acres?—No, they employ them; they say they are good men.

2516. I think you said just now that you think that it requires some care not to multiply small holders in a place where more than a certain number could not succeed?—Yes, I have always thought that there are too many in one place.

2517. You think it possible that one might cut the throat of another?—I think they would do well if we had fewer. We have an immense number at Minster Lovell; we have 80 holdings which 60 people hold.

2518. You would not like to see another estate cut up alongside in the same way?—No; and the people do not like it themselves. In fact they did not like the idea of my coming and giving evidence; they think that you are going to make more holdings, and that there will be more potatoes in the market, and they would not do so well.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2519. How long ago is it since this estate was let out in small holdings?—The small holdings were first made in 1847.

2520. Has the value of the rents been changed since then?—Yes, the rents have gone down with the bad times.

2521. Do they ever go up with the good times?—Yes; when I went there 16 years ago, the ordinary rent was 13 *l.*; they went up to 14 *l.*, and I know one was 15 *l.*, and one, which is very exceptional, was 17 *l.* 10 *s.* It was the interest of the money the man bought it with. But that was an exception. There was a very great demand for them in the prosperous times.

2522. Do you consider that that was a very high rental for the prosperous times?—Yes; they say that they could do better then at those rents than they can now.

2523. Do

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

2523. Do you consider that the land is over-rented now?—That is a very difficult question to answer, because there is the value of the buildings. The way I look at it is this: supposing that I was to divide my glebe into four-acre holdings, and put buildings on them, I could not put substantial buildings under 100 *l.*; I should want 6 per cent. for that; you would say that that would be fair; and I should want 30 *s.* an acre for the land; that would bring it up very high; it is very high for them to have to pay as cultivators.

2524. You consider that the rental was high 15 years ago, but then I understand that they could pay off the mortgages; that there was a margin of profit which they were enabled to use for the redemption of the freehold?—Yes, they were able to save money 15 years ago at the higher rent, which they cannot do now with the lower rent.

2525. The rents are lower now?—Yes.

2526. And yet they cannot pay off the mortgage?—That is so; because the reduction in the rent is not in proportion to the reduction in the price of the produce.

2527. Do you not consider then that the rental of the land is too high if they cannot save the money?—I think it is very high indeed.

2528. Is it prortionately higher now at the lower rental than it was 15 years ago?—Yes, it is higher in proportion to the price of the produce.

2529. They cannot farm so well now at a profit at the lower rental?—No, not so well as they did years ago at the higher rental; and it is the same with the farmers.

2530. Have you any idea of what the value of the produce created on the land is per acre?—No; it is exceedingly difficult to get at that; and I can tell you why. A few years ago some one, one of Arch's delegates, went over, and the men gave him the value, and it was published, and immediately the rents were raised, and the people are in the state you know of, "once bit twice shy." But I have always been inquiring myself about these things, and I have come to the conclusion that, taking one holding with another, 7 *l.* 10 *s.* is the value of all the produce per acre.

2531. In the 7 *l.* 10 *s.* per acre, do you include what they consume themselves?—Yes, I include the value of what is grown as if it were sold. I gave to the honourable Chairman the value of what is produced on the land, whether they consume it or not. I came to the conclusion myself, and I took three chance men, and I put it to them, and they all said, "You have got it very fairly, I do not think you could do it more fairly."

2532. That is about 11 *s.* a week, is it not?—Yes; but then there is all the expense to come out of it: that would be the value of what is produced by the land.

2533. My object in asking you these questions is to try and get a comparison of the value between the small holder and that of the agricultural labourer?—Yes; I see what you mean.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

2534. The small holder on his four acres gets 30 *l.* a year gross income?—Yes.

2535. That is about 11 *s.* a week?—It may be.

2536. But the agricultural labourer gets 10 *s.* a week as his net income; how can a small holder be so much better off?—Because the small holders with holdings of four, three, and two acres go to work as well.

2537. You do not consider that four acres represents the whole of the man's time?—No, it cannot do so. No man thinks to live on four acres.

2538. Would a man with 7 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre off his 10 acres be able to live upon his holding?—If he had the same land I think he possibly might. I think he would. I do not know of course.

2539. You told us of a case in which 30 acres were held by three families; that is an average of 10 acres each?—Yes.

2540. Would they get 10 times 7 *l.* 10 *s.* as the total produce of those 30 acres?—I think they would.

2541. But not more?—It is very difficult to say. Those are very successful men. They do a great deal with their pigs, and they farm very high; they farm my land beautifully; they spend a lot of money on manure, and they are very industrious and pushing men; and I think it is very likely that they would make quite that if not more.

2542. Have you any idea of what the net value per acre would be to them?—No; say 16 acres at 2 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre, that would be 40 *l.* They pay me about 24 *l.* for their 16 acres, and they have some grass land of mine for which they pay me rather more, say that is 66 *l.* Then there is 30 acres. I find it very difficult on the spur of the moment to answer that question; but those men with their three families are doing very well; they are doing the best in the place.

2543. What I am anxious to find out is the relative income of the agricultural labourer and the small holder. I want to know how much would go for rent and taxes, and what is left to a man holding 10 acres of land who gives his whole time to it. If 10 *s.* a week represents an agricultural labourer's income, what do you think fairly represents a small holder's income with 10 acres?—I do not know that I can answer the question.

Chairman.

2544. Have you made any calculation of that kind?—I have not made a calculation of that kind. My calculation is that the value to a man of the produce of the land with his pigs at Minster Lovell on an average of 80 holdings would be 7 *l.* 10 *s.*; some men are doing very much better than that according to their capital and stock of pigs. One man has one breeding sow and another man has two; one man is successful and another is not. But if I give you that you may fairly calculate for yourselves what you reckon the outgoings would be if you say what you put the land at.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2545. But you gave general evidence that the condition of these men was much better than that of the agricultural labourers?—I do not say that it is much better, I say it is better; their children are better clothed, and they are generally better fed and better conditioned.

2546. Have you any idea of the value of the produce of the larger farms of from 250 to 300 acres?—No, I am not able to get at that; they complain that they make nothing you know. The question was the difference between the value of the produce of a small holding as against a small farm. According to the 7 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre, it would produce about 1,800 *l.* a year from all the small holdings. Supposing that land was let as a farm of 250 acres, do you think that it would produce a produce of 1,800 *l.* a year? I think you know more about it than I do. I think they generally say that there are three rents; a rent for the labour, a rent for the landland, and a rent for the farmer; that would be about 1,000 *l.* If a farmer could make 7 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre, would he have reason to complain of the present depression and the present rents? I think that is the way to put it.

2547. I have only one more question to ask you. You say that the farmers pay a rental of about 33 *s.* an acre?—No, that was the rent of my land when I first went there. That was the rent paid by a farmer 16 years ago.

2548. And you let it to a small holder at three guineas an acre?—Yes, they gave me 3 *l.* 10 *s.*, and I paid all outgoings, so that I called it three guineas an acre. I have reduced it now to 30 *s.* an acre. The principle I go upon is this: I say to a man, if you cannot live at that rent tell me what you can live upon, and I let it to him for that. I know that a man ought to have it at a rent that he can get a living on.

2549. That, you think, is the right principle, that the labouring man should first get a living out of it?—Yes, and the men do very well. I may tell you this, perhaps, that one of my small holders brings his rent on the 25th of March and the 29th of September in gold to me without my asking for it.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2550. How far did you say you were from a railway station?—Three miles; and of course part of the estate is further.

2551. Then there are no advantages in Minster Lovell with regard to your nearness to a large town or to a railway station?—No, that is what is wanted.

2552. It might be termed an out-of-the-way place, I suppose?—Yes, it might.

2553. You said that there were 511 small holders, individuals I mean?—The population of the whole parish is 511.

2554. Then how many small holders are there?—There are 60 small holders, and the population on that estate is 300.

2555. Do you think that if the parish were large, and consequently had more employers, these small holders would do better by getting more employment?—Yes, quite so.

2556. Or if you had a large town or large towns near you it would be better, would it not?—Yes, that would make an immense difference.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

2557. So that you are not trying the experiment under any advantages, but rather disadvantages in that respect?—I have always considered that we are under great disadvantages in that respect. But the great advantage is the quality of the land in its being suitable for potatoes, and its being capable of cultivation in wet weather.

2558. In what condition are the cottages?—The cottages are in fair condition.

2559. Have they out-houses and buildings?—The all have pig-styes, and some have stables and a barn, and some have not, they only have pig-styes.

2560. Would they be large enough as cottage farms for the cultivation of 10 or 15 acres of land?—I think that if these men had 10 acres of land they would want some more buildings. For instance, when a man gets 10 acres of land he uses one of the cottages as a store-house.

2561. Then he would want extra buildings?—Yes, he would want a stable built, and he might want a cow-house, and he might want a little barn.

2562. Do you know how many of the holders hold subject to a rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.*?—I am sorry to say that I do not know that.

2563. But there would be a certain number of them?—Yes, there are a good number. I should have had to ask every individual, therefore I do not know the number.

2564. But do those who are subject to this rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* pay a rent besides to the owner of the rent-charge?—No; the rent-charge very often belongs to a different person to the owner.

2565. Let me put my question in this way: Supposing that a holder holds subject to a rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.*, he has to pay that 9 *l.* 10 *s.* to the owner of the rent-charge, whoever he might be, and he pays a rent besides, does he not?—Yes.

2566. Can the owner of the rent-charge turn him out at any time so long as he pays the rent and the rent-charge?—No, he cannot. I have heard them say, but I have never seen the agreements, that they cannot turn him out under a certain time; they must be in arrears for a certain time.

2567. But provided that the rent and the rent-charges are paid the holder cannot be turned out at all?—No, he has security of tenure in that respect.

2568. Then he considers himself the owner?—Yes.

2569. Then you have another class, a man who is a freeholder and has bought his rent-charge?—Yes.

2570. Are there any number of them?—I think there are about a dozen freeholders, and I think about nine rent-charge men.

2571. Men who hold subject to the rent-charge?—Yes, I think that is about it.

2572. In the rate-book is there any distinction made between these two classes of holders, leaseholders

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

holders and freeholders?—No, they are all put down as owners.

2573. And with regard to the feeling of ownership, there is little or no difference between them?—No, they feel that they are secure; they say he holds the scrip when they have the rent charges; but they feel just as secure.

2574. Then you have a third class of men, who are simple tenants, and pay so much a year?—Yes.

2575. And who, you say, cultivate their land also?—Yes.

2576. But in the case of the first two classes, the freeholder and the man who holds under a rent-charge, if they should want to sell their holding they reap the advantage of any increased price themselves?—Of course they do.

2577. But the tenant, I am speaking of the other class, however well he may deal with his land, if he leaves it has no advantage?—No, he would lose everything.

2578. Is all the land occupied?—All of it, the 80 allotments.

2579. And if there is any lot to be sold, subject to a rent-charge, are there purchasers, as a rule?—Yes, they can always be sold.

2580. I saw a notice of one lot sold on 25th February 1885 for a four-acre lot with a cottage and outbuildings, sold at the "Fleece" Hotel, for 175 *l.*, would that be a purchase subject to a rent-charge?—I think that that was a holding on the worst part that had gone out of condition, got low and poor; I think it was a freehold. It was a freehold in a bad condition on the worst part of the estate, and the buildings dilapidated.

2581. But you do not know?—I think so; but a little time ago the things were very much worse than they are now there; and I think that was four acres, but it would be very likely not one of the best. It must have been a freehold.

2582. You know of no case in which the rent-charge has not been paid, in which the holder of his rent-charge has not received it?—You mean that he has forfeited his holding, do you?

2583. I will put it in that way. You know of no case in which a man has forfeited his holding through non-payment of the rent-charge?—I do not.

2584. And supposing that those rent-charges belonged to the local authorities, should you have any reasonable fear that the local authorities would lose, or that the rent-charge was not to be paid?—Not the least.

2585. And in case they were not paid, and the local authority had to take the land back, should you fear that by the sale of the land the local authority would lose?—Not if it was bought judiciously. Of course if they bought at an exorbitant price, like Fergus O'Connor paid for it at first, they might lose, but not if they bought it at a fair price.

2586. I think you said that you were in favour of not allowing men to sub-let, so as to become landlords?—Quite so; the small owners always put the rents very high.

2587. We may take it as your general evidence that very small holdings are good to supplement wages, and larger ones, say of 20 acres or thereabouts, are good for a man to maintain his family?—Yes; I think they are good in every way; good both to the men in the parish and to the farmers.

2588. And have you had experience of other parishes?—Yes.

2589. Rural parishes?—Yes, several parishes.

2590. Is it your opinion that if facilities of the kind that have been named were offered by the local authorities, you would find a percentage, a certain number of the labourers, and the village population generally, who would avail themselves of those facilities?—You will understand that that is a very large question; but from my experience I do not think that at the present rate of wages, 10 *s.* a week, many labourers could save the money; but there are a number of village men who perhaps have been labourers, and who go into the towns or into gentlemen's service or something else, who make a little money and then come back and buy these holdings. But I do not think that many men earning 10 *s.* a week who were agricultural labourers could save 100 *l.*

2591. But supposing that it was known prominently that these facilities would be offered to a man when he could get the money, and would continue to be offered, would that affect the life of a young labourer, of say 18 or 19 years of age?—I think it would very much. We do a good deal of that training in our schools. I have had a penny savings bank in my school for many years; we have tried it in that way already.

2592. You think it likely that a certain percentage of the rural population would begin their lives by way of taking advantage at the proper time of these facilities if they were offered?—I think there would be something for these men, an object to them for saving and being careful, which would induce them to put forward great efforts to get money in order to occupy one of these places.

2593. And you have no fear as to their ability to farm the land, and of there being any loss?—No; Minster Lovell is a proof of that. If you ask the farmers how the Minster Lovell people get the money and pay the rents, they are more at sea than any one; they cannot understand it. Therefore these agricultural labourers have their wits about them; they can do it in ways which other people could not.

Mr. *Scale-Hayne.*

2594. You said that agricultural labourers were not gardeners, as a rule?—Not in our part; I do not consider them particularly so.

2595. Have you any facilities in your schools for acquiring agricultural technical education?—No, we have not. And that is what I was rather hinting at, to tell you the truth. I think that we want something of that kind. Mind you, our small holders are splendid cultivators as far as they go; and their children have a very good idea of it. A man came down the other day to Witney to lecture in connection with the nationalization of the land, in which he told the men how they were to cultivate five acres. They laughed at him, and at the ridiculous nonsense he told them to do. But they do not understand what I call gentle-life market gardening.

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

2596. But if there was a better system of technical agricultural education in our rural schools, you think that it would be a great advantage, I presume, to the small holders?—I think it would be a great advantage both to them and to the large farmers too, if they could get a knowledge of agricultural chemistry, and some of these things.

2597. The management of cattle, and so forth?—Yes. They manage their stock exceedingly well. I saw a man the other day going up home with two cows, and there are not any other cows in our neighbourhood in such a good condition as those. And I take a good deal of trouble myself. I wrote out for my tenants and other men the result of the system of feeding the cows at the Aspatria College, and the different effects on the ways of producing butter; and I write out anything that I find on such subjects as artificial manure. But the manure which they principally use with us is nips, that is to say, the waste wool from the blanket factories. They have great faith in that, and that is the principal artificial manure they use.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

2598. You said that the success of these holdings was qualified. You stated afterwards that that was caused by the size of the holdings?—Yes.

2599. Do you consider that the success was qualified also by the circumstances under which they were created, such as a want of local knowledge and the other circumstances of the case?—Do you mean local knowledge of the men?

2600. I mean of the men who started the project. My question is with regard to whether the same operations would be better conducted by the local authorities, so that whatever want of success attended the original project might be rectified if these contracts should be entered into by local bodies?—There is a tradition in the place which is no doubt true, that the original occupiers were not all turned out; that some of them remained. But these men had no knowledge of agriculture, and there is no doubt that a great many of them would have come to grief; they were men who had been brought up in towns. And the success of the place afterwards depended in a great measure upon the right class of men coming into them, the agricultural labourers.

2601. You also stated that the holdings were of the same area as they were at the time of their creation; was that owing to any rules that were made at the beginning?—Fergus O'Connor had a very exaggerated idea of what a man could do with four acres. I have it all down here; it was a most ridiculous idea.

2602. What I mean is, have the holders any power of subdivision of their holdings?—If a man has a freehold he may subdivide it.

2603. But, as a matter of fact, in this case he has not subdivided it?—No, they do not subdivide. For instance, one man, perhaps, is a tradesman, a shoemaker; he may not want all his land himself, and he may say "an acre is as much as I can cultivate," and may let the next man have three acres; but they do not divide them in the Irish sense.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

2604. You made some very interesting statements with regard to the character of the people, and some comparison between their character and that of the people in the village near; were the conditions of comparison equal in both cases?—Yes.

2605. In regard to sobriety, had they both the same facilities for being otherwise?—Yes; there is a large public-house on the estate; it is a house of call, it is not for the estate, and there is a beershop on it, and they have quite the same facilities for going to the public-house if they like. I do not mean to say that the men in my village are drunkards, but I mean to say that taking population against population, there is a greater number of men among the agricultural labourers who go to the public-house in my village as compared with the others. Some of these people no doubt go to the public-house to have a glass of beer; but they do not drink or injure themselves, or waste their money.

2606. Do you think that it would be preferable that the rent-charge of which you spoke should be the property of the locality rather than it should be the property of a private individual, as is proposed in Mr. Collings' scheme, for instance?—It requires to be looked at all round to answer that question; I am without experience. All I have tried to give you now has been based on my own experience at Minster Lovell, of facts that I have seen; and I have tried to avoid any imaginary cases.

2607. You are not prepared to give an opinion upon that?—I should have to think it out. There is this to be said, which occurs to me, that if a man has to deal with the local authority he will be dealing, perhaps, with a body who are less under prejudice. A private individual may have his fancies and turn a man out, but the local authority could not turn them out.

Sir *George Campbell.*

2608. I understand it to be the result of your experience that when land is once put into small holdings, whatever vicissitudes may afterwards happen, it generally remains in small holdings in some shape or other?—Yes; when there are buildings on it. I have thought myself as to whether with the holdings in Minster Lovell being too small it would answer for any one to buy that estate and pull down every other house; but he would lose 3 *l.* rent for every house he pulled down.

2609. And in your experience most of the holders in Minster Lovell are people who have got other trades?—Most of them; not trades but occupations. Almost all the people who have four acres supplement their living by some kind of work.

2610. In the future, if small holdings are promoted, do you think it is most desirable to promote

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

promote small holdings of a character that may be held by people that have other occupations, or to promote small farms?—That would very much depend upon the locality. In our locality I should say it would be better for the people to have sufficient land to occupy all their time; but if it were a locality with profitable trades or occupations, like Birmingham, or large iron-works like Newcastle, or any of those places, I should not think so.

Mr. WALTER DALTON, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2611. You were born at Minster Lovell, I think?—Yes.

2612. And you have lived there all your life?—Yes.

2613. What occupation do you follow?—A farm labourer.

2614. Then when did you first take a holding on the Minster Lovell Estate?—Nine years ago.

2615. And now what is your present position?—A builder's labourer.

2616. And you have a holding as well?—Yes.

2617. The same holding you took nine years ago?—Yes.

2618. What is the extent of that?—Two acres.

2619. Do you live upon it?—Yes.

2620. What rent do you pay for the two acres?—£. 9, with one deducted back.

2621. You have not got any rent-charge to pay, or anything of that sort?—No.

2622. That includes everything?—Yes, except 13 *s.* 7 *d.* tithe rent-charge.

2623. Who is your landlord?—Batts.

2624. Is he the owner of the land?—Yes.

2625. What do you grow on those two acres?—Roots, potatoes, swedes, mangolds, and barley chiefly.

2626. And do you keep any pigs, or anything of that sort?—Yes, I could not do without.

2627. Do you keep any poultry?—Yes.

2628 How does it pay you?—Well, I find a benefit by the small holding to what I did when I had not it.

2629. When you were only a labourer, you mean?—Yes.

2630. Do you feed your family out of it to a certain extent?—Yes, such as vegetables and things like that. Then there are the pigs. We never sell anything except the potatoes.

2631. The only thing you sell off the holding is potatoes?—Yes.

2632. All the rest you consume yourselves?—Yes, with the pigs.

2633. Have you made any calculation at all as to what advantage it is to you; how much it is in money?—No, I never did.

2634. But you find yourself better off than you were when you were working entirely for others?—A considerable deal.

2635. You have to work hard, perhaps?—Of course we do work, you know.

2636. Are you liable to be turned out of this holding; have you got any security in the holding?—No, not at all; I should never get turned out as long as I pay the rent, I expect, unless the man were to sell it, or anything of that kind.

Chairman—continued.

2637. You depend upon the sense of justice of your landlord?—Yes.

2638. But would you like to be owner of the land; some of your neighbours are owners, are they not?—Yes, several of them.

2639. You have not thought of becoming an owners?—No.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2640. Does the 8 *l.* include the house?—Yes, a cottage on the two acres.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2641. What rental do you estimate the value of the house at; what would you have to pay if you had no land to it?—I should say I would get it for 3 *l.*

Sir *George Campbell.*

2642. Who is your landlord?—Batts.

2643. Does he own only this small property, or is he a large landowner?—He has a good bit of property; I think he has three or four, I do not know which, of these small holdings.

2644. But he is not a large landlord?—No, he is not a large landlord.

2645. Do you think that is a good thing for a man to have another trade, and take a bit of land besides?—Yes, I do.

2646. Do you use any horses upon your land?—Sometimes.

2647. Have you any horse of your own, or do you hire a horse?—There are some there with, we will say, holdings of 10 acres, that is, two or three small holdings occupied by one man, and he will keep a horse. But that is not enough to employ him alone, and you hire him if you want a bit done.

2648. Can you hire him pretty cheaply?—Yes, you do it at so much an acre, plough it, drill it, or anything of that kind, if you want it done.

2649. Have you always lived in this village?—Yes, all my lifetime; I was bred and born in Minster Lovell.

2650. And I suppose you would be glad enough to own the land if you could?—Certainly, I would.

2651. But you make it pay by growing potatoes and things of that kind at present?—Yes.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

2652. What wages do you get as a mason's labourer?—Threepence-halfpenny an hour. We are paid by the hour.

2653. What proportion of your time do you give to mason's labouring and what proportion to the land; do you occupy say, two or three months in the year on the land?—No.

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

2654. Do you do nearly all your cultivation after your other working hours are finished?—Yes, on my two acres. Then I have two boys, strong boys, and they help me, you know.

2655. And you eat all the bacon that you fat?—No.

2656. You sell that?—Yes.

2657. How many pigs do you kill in the year?—I never fat many pigs, I breed.

2658. You breed and sell?—Yes.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

2659. You said that you were a farm labourer once?—Yes.

2660. What wages did you get then?—Ten shillings.

2661. That is the price, is it?—That is the standing price now at the present time?

2662. Was that as a farm labourer?—Yes.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

2663. Not as a mason's labourer?—No, I am paid by the hour now, 3½*d.*

2664. Then can you get as much work as you want?—I work regularly.

2665. As a mason's labourer?—Yes, I have been on for him now on this firm three years.

2666. They do not object to your having the small holding to work with?—No.

Sir *George Campbell.*

2667. In most of the persons you know about, do you think that most of the tradesmen, like yourself, would like to take up small holdings if they got the chance?—I believe so. We have several tradesmen with small holdings at our place, even those who work for my masters.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2668. Have you estimated the value of the produce of your two acres?—No, I never did.

Mr. ALFRED DE BOCK PORTER, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2669. YOU are Secretary, I think, and Financial Adviser to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?—Yes.

2670. You have been secretary for how long?—I have been secretary since October last. I was financial secretary for the seven years previous.

2671. I think the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have adopted some system of sales to their agricultural tenants recently?—That was in April 1885; and the Paper has become a Parliamentary Paper; it was moved for by Mr. Ashley at the time.

2672. Would you state summarily what that system is?—On certain estates the Commissioners made an offer to the tenants to sell the holdings on condition that they paid 15 per cent. of the purchase-money down, and left the 85 per cent. to be spread over 30 years, with a payment of 5½ per cent. upon the mortgage money left.

2673. May I ask you, in the first place, what governed the selection of estates to which this offer was made?—I think the Commissioners first adopted it with some estates in Wales, where there were a number of small tenants, and the property had recently fallen out of a beneficial lease and come into the Commissioners' possession. Many of the holders were desirous of purchasing, because the property had been in their hands for some time; and the Commissioners said that if the whole of the estate would take it they would sell upon these terms; and one or two estates were so dealt with.

2674. I suppose the Commissioners have undertaken this matter experimentally?—That is so.

2675. They have not laid down, at present, any general rule, but they are waiting for experience?—No general offer has been made to all the tenants; it is only on certain estates.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

2676. Does that 5½ per cent. cover the sinking fund?—Yes; 3⅝ is the interest; it is 3·63 to work it out exactly.

Chairman.

2677. Can you tell us to what extent this system has been adopted?—Between 9,000 and 10,000 acres have been sold for 258,000 *l.*

2678. How was the value of the land settled?—That was a matter of negociation with each tenant.

2679. Was there separate negociation for each estate, and for each tenant on the estate?—Yes.

2680. What is the total of the land vested in the Commissioners?—I cannot tell you exactly, but, roughly, the Commissioners have 300,000 acres; 230,000 in possession, and about 70,000 in reversion.

2681. And of the 230,000 acres this system has been applied hitherto to about 10,000 acres?—Yes.

2682. Have you any particulars of the number of tenants and the classes of the holdings?—There were 38 cases of under 10 acres; 22 cases over 10 acres and under 20 acres; 15 cases over 20 acres and under 50 acres, and 52 cases over 50 acres.

2683. Were these all agricultural holdings, or were any of them town holdings?—Two of them might be considered to be town holdings; they had a dormant building value; but with that exception they were all agricultural holdings.

2684. Can you give us any statement as to the result of these transactions, so far as your experience has gone?—They have been very satisfactory to the Commissioners. We have had not the slightest difficulty with any purchaser, with regard to the payment of the instalments; some of them even paying before the date at which they become due. The Commissioners give to each tenant the option of paying the balance at any time should they become possessed of any money, and several have adopted that course.

2685. Of paying in instalments?—Each mortgage deed has a schedule attached to it which sets out the 60 payments for the 30 years showing for the end of each half-year exactly

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Chairman—continued.

exactly how much capital is outstanding; and the Commissioners will accept that at any time without notice.

2686. What may I take to be the object of the Commissioners in adopting this system. I imagine it was not solely to create small holdings?—The first estate that I suggested to the Commissioners that they should deal with in this way was a large estate in Wales which, if the Commissioners had retained it permanently in their hands, would have required a very considerable expenditure for putting the buildings into the condition which the Commissioners would deem necessary, and as the tenants had themselves done a great deal to the buildings, I thought it was well to suggest this experiment to the Commissioners; and it was adopted with considerable success.

2687. The result is that the funds of the Commissioners are invested in Consols, I suppose, instead of in land in these cases?—Not wholly in Consols. The Commissioners have wide powers of investment; they sometimes buy ground-rents.

2688. But in securities other than agricultural land?—Yes.

2689. As a rule are the tenants small tenants. I forget whether you gave the particulars of the whole of the sales?—No; that was classifying the whole 10,000 acres.

2690. You have not made any sales to large tenants then?—Yes. There are 52 cases where the acreage is over 50 acres. For instance, there is a case with 226 acres, one with 238 acres, and one case of 811 acres; and there are cases of 400 acres and 200 acres.

2691. Do the Commissioners propose to continue this system?—I think they will do so. Of course it has not been wise to press sales of this kind at a time when there has been so much depression; but the Commissioners have adopted this plan with regard to deferred payments, and whenever we have sold land by auction we have given the purchaser the option of paying for it in the same way.

2692. It does not follow, then, that tenants of the Commissioners, if they were anxious to buy on these terms; would be able to do so?—No; it would depend upon whether the Commissioners considered the estate desirable to maintain as a permanent investment.

2693. Then are there any other sales that have been effected by the Commissioners?—Through the medium of the Commissioners upwards of 400,000 acres have passed out of mortmain by enfranchising leasehold property, selling reversions and enfranchising copyholds.

2694. In those cases there has not been this system of deferred payment?—No; that is over the whole time the Commission has been in existence.

2695. Have the Commissioners effected any sales of glebe lands?—Yes; under what are known as the Ecclesiastical Leasing Acts, the Commissioners have sold about 28,900 acres for 2,000,000 *l.*

2696. In these cases, have offers been made to the tenants?—Not generally; usually to adjacent landowners.

Chairman—continued.

2697. I think you wanted to make some correction with respect to glebe lands. There again I ask you whether that has any reference to our special inquiry?—There was a statement that the glebe lands were only 500,000 acres. I see that it has been stated subsequently, in evidence, that there are 659,000 acres of glebe lands as shown in the return made in 1887; but the annual value given therein is fallacious, because it includes a quantity of building land; it gives an acreage of 659,000 acres, and an estimated value of 908,000 *l.*; whereas, if you glance through the return, you will find a number of cases similar to that in which seven acres is shown with an income of 973 *l.*, which arises from building land.

2698. A suggestion has been made to this Committee that Parliament might require the sale of the glebe lands for the purpose of creating small holdings. Would you see any objection to such a proposal?—They are very unevenly distributed, as shown on the Glebe Lands Return, which is made out in dioceses instead of in counties. There are some counties where the acreage of land is very large, there being no tithe rent-charge, the land being granted in lieu of tithe; and others where it is very small. For instance, in the diocese of Peterborough, which is mainly composed of the counties of Leicester and Northampton, there are 74,000 acres; while in the diocese of Chester there are less than 4,000 acres.

2699. That might be a disadvantage, supposing that the sale were beneficial, to the diocese of Chester not to have more glebe land; but that would not be an argument against the sale of them, in Parliament?—There would be greater difficulty in finding purchasers for them in the large counties, because some livings have 300 or 400 acres, where the land has been allotted in lieu of tithe.

2700. They might not all be taken up for small holdings?—There would be a difficulty in getting them disposed of in that way.

2701. Do you see any other objection to the transfer to the local authorities?—Not if it is on adequate terms.

2702. Assuming that a fair price was given, you would see no objection to the transfer?—No. I think less objection is felt to the sale of glebe land now than there was some years ago.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

2703. In most cases it would be a great benefit, would it not?—It would be a great benefit in many cases.

2704. I mean considering the present state of land?—When a proposal for the sale of glebe comes before the Commissioners they are obliged to look at it from the point of view, whether it is for the permanent interest of the living.

2705. The question put from the Chair I understand to be rather larger than that; but at the present moment it would be a grand thing to get rid of a great deal of the glebe land in that way, would it not?—If a good price could be got for it.

2706. That is the difficulty?—Yes; the finding of a purchaser.

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Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

2707. You were asked whether the right of pre-emption was given to the tenants of glebe lands. They are generally a fleeting body of men, are they not; and not a permanent body, like tenants on large estates?—In very many cases they are the tenants of a larger estate, and the glebe land is a small island in the middle of it.

2708. But they change much more rapidly, do they not, than the tenants on larger estates?—I do not know that they change more rapidly than our average tenants, unless the holding is a very small one.

2709. That is what I mean. A new clergyman comes who is anxious to get a larger rent and so on?—They are occasionally disturbed in that way.

2710. They are more often disturbed than on a larger estate, are they not?—Yes; property held by a corporation like the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Mr. *Lowther.*

2711. In the case of the sales you effected of the 9,400 acres, had you any difficulty in coming to an agreement with the tenants as to the price?—No serious difficulty. The Commissioners in the circular which was sent to each tenant stated that if within a reasonable time the tenant declined to deal with us the Commissioners reserved to themselves the right to sell to other parties, subject, of course, to the tenancy.

2712. What was the form your negotiation took; did you offer to accept a price, or did you leave the tenant to offer a price in the first instance?—We usually name to the tenant a price which the Commissioners would be prepared to take.

2713. Then I suppose that he answered you with a less price?—A great many of the negotiations took place in Wales, and some difficulty was experienced in explaining the scheme to those who did not understand the English language thoroughly, and it was necessary for the Commissioners' surveyor to go to the spot and see each individual tenant; and in that way they dealt with two or three estates as a whole: they saw each tenant, and gave him an idea of the price and cleared up the whole estate. For instance, on one estate of 12,000 acres that was sold to 20 tenants, the whole estate was cleared up.

2714. Can you say at all generally at what number of years' purchase these estates were sold?—Roughly at 28 years' purchase.

2715. Did you find that you got a better price from the small tenants, or from the large tenants?—There was greater eagerness shown by the small tenants than by the large tenants.

2716. Greater eagerness to close with the Commissioners' offer, do you mean?—Yes; that was partly, of course, because the deposit would be comparatively so much less; the 15 per cent. that had to be paid.

2717. And you have had no difficulty in getting the payments?—None whatever.

2718. What provision did you make in the event of an instalment not being paid?—There is power to resume possession; the ordinary foreclosure of a mortgage in the event of the mortgagee not paying.

Mr. *Lowther*—continued.

2719. And in that case would the tenant forfeit all the instalments he had paid?—The Commissioners would doubtless re-sell the property, and any margin that accrued to them they would hand over to the original purchaser.

2720. Was there any condition to that effect; was it stated so?—No, it is not stated so.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2721. For what reason did you arrive at 15 per cent. as the amount to be paid down; did you consider it to be a sufficient security?—We thought it was the largest sum that the tenants could afford to pay. The Commissioners felt that they were running a certain amount of risk, but they were inclined to do that in order to try the experiment.

2722. But, as a matter of fact, have you found the 15 per cent. quite sufficient?—Quite.

2723. Have you had any case, among all the sales, where the annual instalments have not been paid?—Not one.

2724. And you have had no difficulty?—None whatever.

2725. You said that the price was arrived at by negotiation; had you any valuation at all?—It was done through the Commissioners' surveyors, who, of course, had their own valuation. The estates had been valued previously at the time when they passed into the Commissioners' hands.

2726. But there was no special valuation in the case of an application for purchase?—Yes; the valuation was in each case revised; the surveyor went down and looked at the property, and negotiated with the tenant, communicating with the office, of course, with regard to the offer that was to be made.

2727. Have you any general rule, or are you governed in any way by the number of years' purchase of the rental?—No.

2728. Could you give us one or two instances of, say, a 10-acre, a 20-acre, or a 30-acre farm, as to the rental and the purchase price?—I am afraid I cannot give you the rental at the moment.

2529. What the rental was prior to the purchase, and what the purchase price was fixed on?—No; if I have to give any further evidence I will look up that point; but I have not got it here. I can give you the price for the different holdings.

2730. What the price was in the previous rentals?—I have not the previous rentals with me; I can easily supply the information.

Chairman.

2731. Could you forward that to the Clerk of the Committee?—Yes.

2732. You understand what Mr. Collings wishes?—Yes, quite; but the names would not be disclosed.

2733. Certainly not. If the estates are simply numbered, with the area of the estate and the rental previously paid and the amount of money agreed upon; that is what the honourable Member wants?—I will give half-a-dozen examples.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2734. Of the three kinds you named in your evidence just now?—Yes.

2735. We

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Chairman.

2735. We must trust to you to give us examples which you consider fair average examples; there might be exceptional examples?—Yes, I will take a fair average.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2736. Do you, in your agreement, provide for the contingency of the purchaser not being able to pay his annual instalments?—Not beyond the usual provision in a mortgage deed, to foreclose and re-enter.

2737. You do not allow him to offer his holding in the open market, subject to the payments that might be due to you?—He could sell his equity. On one or two occasions the purchaser has sold his equity of redemption, but not a defaulting purchaser.

2738. I am not speaking of a defaulting tenant. Supposing that apurchaser should have paid a portion of the year's instalments, and he feels inclined to sell his holding subject to payments due to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, can he do that?—Yes.

2739. Without your consent?—The Commissioners would have to consent, but of course that would not be withheld.

2740. Would he be able to sub-let this holding during the time he is making his instalments to you; that is to say, supposing that he continues to pay his instalments to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, could he sub-let it during that time?—We should know nothing of it; we should ask no questions. There is no bar to his doing so.

2741. Then as a matter of fact the purchaser, we will say of a 50-acre holding, provided that he paid your instalments, might sub-let and become a landlord?—Yes.

2742. There is nothing to prevent that?—No.

2743. Might he sub-divide his holding?—Yes.

2744. Always supposing that he paid his instalments to you?—Yes; he is a freeholder subject to the mortgage, so that he has all the rights of a freeholder so long as he pays his mortgage money.

2745. Then he might sub-let or sub-divide, always subject to the payment of the interest?—Yes.

2746. And he might sell as well; that is to say, that the consent would not be withheld?—Yes.

2747. So that immediately he enters into contract with you to pay for this holding at so many years' purchase, he might immediately sub-let that at any price he could?—Yes.

2748. Or he might sub-divide it in that way?—Yes.

2749. I do not know whether I should ask you for an expression of opinion as to whether if the object be to cultivating ownership you are likely to secure it in that way?—The Commissioners have nothing to do with that; they sell the land out and out. It was not with the view of creating small holdings that the Commissioners adopted this system; it was with a view to dispose of the land.

2750. You spoke of the glebe lands; is it a fact that the great bulk of the glebe lands are in lots of 100 *l.* a year and downwards?—Only in some districts; in some counties the glebes are of very considerable extent, in other counties they are comparatively small.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

2751. But taking the parishes through, is not the bulk of the land held in quantities of less than 100 acres?—The great bulk is doubtless held in smaller quantities than 100 acres; but there are a very large number of cases where there are very considerable holdings belonging to the incumbents.

2752. And is there a very considerable portion of them under 50 acres?—Yes, a considerable number.

2753. Speaking of the Glebe Lands Act of 1888, I do not know whether you remember Section 8. Are sales allowed for the purposes of small holdings, or are they confined for the purposes of the Allotments Act of 1887 under that section?—The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have nothing to do with the Glebe Lands Act of 1888; that is administered by the Land Commission.

2754. Then they have not had your sanction?—The money comes to the Commissioners after the sales are completed.

2755. Then you have to do with the sale of glebe lands?—Yes, under what are called the Ecclesiastical Leasing Acts.

2756. Are there not considerable expenses in your office connected with the sale of glebe lands?—The expense would be greater than to an owner who was not under the disability of an incumbent. The Commissioners have to satisfy themselves that the price is a fair one; then the patron has to consent, and the bishop has to have notice; and this frequently involves the employment of several professional men, which increases the costs.

2757. And in case of the sale of a few acres of land, do not those expenses act as a barrier for the sale of land by the clergyman to a would-be purchaser?—To some extent; but the Commissioners frequently stipulate with the purchaser that he shall pay the whole of the expenses when the property is a very small one.

2758. But in cases where those expenses have been incurred by surveyors and competent men, and the result put before the Commissioners, do they not, in addition to that, require fees from their surveyor and different officers, which are put over and above, and which are added to the expenses already incurred?—It is usual for an incumbent to employ his own surveyor and his own solicitor; the Commissioners have to employ their own surveyor and their own solicitor; but if there are two solicitors employed the fee is modified; it has to be divided to a certain extent, although the aggregate amount of the solicitors' charges would no doubt be somewhat larger than if there were only one solicitor to deal with, and the same with regard to the surveyors.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

2759. I understand that the first estate you sold was in Wales?—Yes.

2760. You told us that it was sold because it was not a good holding?—Hardly that. Until some four or five years ago, I do not think that any rents were more easily received than those in Wales. But this was a large estate with a considerable number of

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

tenants; and if the Commissioners retained an estate of that kind in a ring fence as a permanent estate on investment, they would have to expend a considerable sum of money in putting all the buildings into what they would consider satisfactory repair; whereas in Wales the estate had been in the hands of tenants who were satisfied with buildings which the Commissioners would not be satisfied with, and it was thought desirable that they should give the tenants the option of purchasing them entirely, instead of themselves expending a considerable sum of money in buildings.

2761. You were not anxious to get rid of it, then, because it was a bad holding?—Not because it was a bad holding, but because its retention would have involved a considerable expenditure.

2762. What was the income upon the commuted freehold value which the Commissioners would be satisfied with?—It was sold at about 28 years' purchase on the net annual value.

2763. About 3½ per cent.?—Yes.

2764. Is that what you consider a good rental?—Yes, that is a very fair price; we should consider that a fair price.

2765. If you had spent this money on the land, would you have got 3½ per cent. still?—When a large body like the Commissioners put up buildings they cannot put them up as cheaply as the tenant can, and a considerable amount of capital has to be sunk which bears no adequate return.

2766. Then your reason for getting rid of the property was really because the tenants could secure an income from the holding which you could not if you remained the freeholder?—Yes.

Sir *George Campbell.*

2767. I understand that in a large number of cases the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have sold away rights to neighbouring landlords without giving any option to the occupiers of buying?—Yes; in glebe cases the Commissioners are only approving parties; they have to approve the contract entered into between the incumbent and the purchaser.

2768. My question was not confined to glebes?—With regard to their own property, they have often sold to adjacent landowners.

2769. Without giving any option to the occupiers?—Yes.

2770. Do not you think, as a matter of public policy, that it is desirable that they should first give the option to the occupier of buying?—The Commissioners usually intimate to the tenants of the property for sale, if they have decided to part with it, and frequently give them the option.

2771. Generally, have you found any keenness on the part of the tenants to buy?—Mainly with regard to small holdings.

2772. In the Welsh cases, have you found all the tenants buy?—Yes, with one or two exceptions, I think. On one estate, where there were about 14 holdings, they were not taken up and sold to other parties until after they had been declined by the tenants.

2773. Could you give the Committee any idea of the average size of Welsh holdings, with regard

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

to acres, excluding the larger ones?—There were four acres at 150 *l.*, 13 acres at 375 *l.*, 34 acres at 600 *l.*, 40 acres at 870 *l.*, two acres at 250 *l.*, 14 acres at 330 *l.*, and 50 acres at 980 *l.*

2774. Were they generally of that class?—In Wales, for the most part.

2775. Did you find a general keenness on the part of the tenants to buy?—Yes.

2776. I think the interest at 3⅛ per cent. would come very nearly to the full rent; at all events it would come very near it. The result is that the purchaser has during the term of 20 years to pay a good deal more than he pays now, is it not?—He pays a little more; he pays 5½ instead of 3⅛ per cent.

2777. Is there any considerable additions to his public burthens?—They would be the same.

2778. Would not any new landlord's burthens fall upon him?—The calculation would be based upon the net rental.

2779. Is it not the case that in some of the midland counties where the glebes in ecclesiastical holdings are largest, and where the glebe holders are most depressed, there is a very large, what we may call, mechanical industry, a great deal of shoemaking and trades of that kind on the part of small people who are at present very much inclined to take up the land?—Some incumbents have broken up their glebes and let them to small tradesmen and others.

2780. That is what I mean. Has not at the present time that process gone on largely; is there not a great disposition on the part of glebe owners to divide land and to let it to small people?—Yes. The difficulty is about the buildings. The incumbent is liable for dilapidations; and if he tries an experiment of that kind and cuts up a farm into a number of small holdings, the buildings become of very little value, and yet he is liable for dilapidations. If he has a glebe farm with a set of buildings suitable for the cultivation of 200 or 300 acres he cannot cut it up wholly into two or three-acre plots, because those buildings would be useless, and he has no capital with which to rearrange them.

2781. Under the present circumstances under which the ecclesiastical holders are anxious to get rid of the land and the small people are anxious to take it, do you think the law might be altered in such a way as to facilitate that process?—The difficulty is that the demand does not always arise where the land is available for the purpose.

2782. But have you not told us that at the present moment there is a good deal of that sort of thing going on?—But there are a good many cases where incumbents would be glad to do it and cannot do it. It is going on gradually; but I do not think you can force it.

2783. But do not you think that the law might be altered in the matter of dilapidations, to relieve an incumbent of his liability, if in the judgment of some competent authority he has land that might be let advantageously to small holders?—Possibly.

2784. Have you considered the possibility of letting ecclesiastical lands permanently, somewhat

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

what in the nature of the feu system in Scotland. I daresay you know what that is?—No, we have tried no experiment of that kind.

2785. Would the present English law permit of experiments of that kind?—The Commissioners are perfectly free with regard to their own land to do anything they please in the way of letting or selling.

2786. Are they free to let permanently?—Perfectly.

2787. You have not tried any experiments?—Not of that character.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2788. I think you are by far the largest tithe-owners in the country?—The Commissioners are.

2789. Might I ask whether you have any legal power to allow any one liable for tithes to redeem them by the surrender of land instead of money payments?—Partly exchange with the landowner do you mean?

2790. No; to give up land instead of redeeming the tithe by money payments. If the landowner was subject to 200 *l.* or 300 *l.* a year for tithes, could you legally accept lands sufficient

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

to redeem that tithe rent-charge?—We could carry out an exchange under the Enclosure Commissioners if we could show that the net value of the tithe was an exact equivalent; or the Commissioners could do it as a purchase. If we thought it desirable, we might receive lands for tithe rent-charge instead of money.

2791. You have power to do that?—The Commissioners are absolutely free with regard to land and tithe rent-charge vested in them.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

2792. Have they the same powers as a private owner?—Yes; they have the fullest powers.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

2793. The tithes are real property. I take it you can do that?—Yes, the Commissioners could do that.

2794. Do they do it?—We have never had such a proposal before us.

2795. You have never had an application from a landowner?—No. We should deal with it as two transactions; we might buy land from a tithe-owner and sell our tithe to him; we should make it two transactions.

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Friday, 17th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. WILLIAM HOLMAN, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

2796. WHERE do you live?—At New Bilton.

2797. In which county is that?—In Warwickshire, near Rugby.

2798. What are you by trade or profession?—I am a bricklayer by trade, but I am a registration agent now, and have been for the last three years.

2799. Are you well acquainted with the condition of the agricultural labourers in your district?—Yes. I have had something to do with them ever since I was 14 years old.

2800. Are you aware of any feeling on the part of the rural population in regard to the subject of the inquiry of the Committee?—Yes. I know that there is a great feeling and a great desire on the part of labourers to be placed in a position so as to get more land in the shape of small holdings.

2801. Do you find that there is a desire for something more than allotments?—Yes; allotments seems to be only the first step for them now.

2802. A man who has an allotment desires to go on, and, if possible, get a small holding?—Yes.

2803. Do you find that there has been a considerable extension in allotments recently?—During the last two years there has been a considerable extension.

2804. To what do you attribute that?—I attribute it to the agitation that has been brought about during the last four or five years on the part of the agricultural labourers.

2805. As a rule, are the labourers who require them supplied with allotments now?—In some cases they are, but in others they are not. I could mention one village straight off where the landlords will, I believe, not allow them to have any more land, and they have tried under the sanitary authority, I refer to Farnborough, where one of the landlords is Archdeacon Holbech; they are only able, I believe, to obtain about four chains each there. I know they have tried to get land through the sanitary authority; I have

Chairman—continued.

helped men in the villages to send requisitions to the sanitary authorities to get allotments.

2806. I must not pursue that point because it is beyond the scope of our inquiry, but, generally speaking, I understand you to say that there is a very great multiplication of allotments?—There is.

2807. And that has induced a still further demand for small holdings?—Yes.

2808. What kind of small holdings do you refer to?—I mean cases where a man has an allotment of an acre of arable land, and he requires a few acres of pasture land so as to be able to keep a cow, or a few sheep, or two or three cows.

2809. In such a case, do you consider a man would be able to live off his allotment?—I am sure he would be.

2810. Without any other employment?—Many of them would not be able to at first; for the first year or two it would be a pinch, but they would be able to eventually, as they acquired a little more each year.

2811. Then you would consider that if small holdings were provided they should be provided of all sizes?—Yes; because there is a great deal of difference in the circumstances of men.

2812. Within what limits of size would you like to see small holdings provided?—From three acres up to 60 or 70 acres.

2813. Do you think that there are people who could stock these holdings and find the capital for working them?—There are some, but of course the larger class would not be able to without assistance.

2814. What assistance do you suppose they could receive?—A small loan, the repayment extending over a period of probably 10 or 20 years.

2815. Who is to make the loan, in your opinion?—The local authority.

2816. Then you desire not only that the local authority should provide land, but that they should also provide the money to work it?—Yes. I know another way which is this: in my own parish we have upwards of 900 *l.* of charity funds which can only be invested in consols or Indian stocks.

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Chairman—continued.

stocks. If we could have used 500 *l.* of that in leasing land we could have placed 30 or 40 of our respectable agricultural labourers upon small holdings, making a loan to them upon which we should have received the interest and capital. It would not have pressed very heavily upon them to pay the interest back upon the loan in the course of 10 or 20 years.

2817. There would be a certain amount of risk in the proceeding, would there not?—Of course there is risk in all cases of lending money.

2818. If the local authorities were to act as money-lenders the ratepayers would have to bear any loss, would they not?—No, I should provide that the tenants bore the loss if it could be done.

2819. But if the tenants could not pay the loss it would have to be provided out of the rates?—Yes, certainly.

2820. Do you think the ratepayers would like the local authority to undertake a business of that kind?—There possibly might be a loss in one or two cases, but I do not anticipate it would be so in many cases. Money is lent on many things that prove failures very often.

2821. You say that money is lent on many things that prove failures, but not by a local authority; is it?—Yes, sometimes.

2822. What do the local authority lend money upon?—Upon even sewage schemes, very often, which do not prove a blessing in many cases.

2823. They do not lend money upon sewage schemes, do they?—They borrow money for carrying out sewerage and other schemes.

2824. That is a different thing altogether; they borrow money for carrying out sewerage schemes, which may be absolutely necessary for the sanitary condition of the district; but they do not lend money. What you propose now is that the local board should lend money to some of its ratepayers at the risk of the rest of its ratepayers; and I ask whether you think the rest of the ratepayers would be satisfied to run such a risk?—Probably they would not. I do not suppose they (the ratepayers) would be satisfied if the land was purchased by the local authority for small holdings.

2825. But it would very much increase the risk of such a transaction, would it not, if, besides buying the land (which after all is a pretty good security), they were to lend money on the personal credit of tenants?—Yes, there is not the least doubt about that.

2826. At the same time, I understand you think that a scheme of purchasing land would not be completely successful unless it were accompanied by the loan of money?—Of course if the local authority purchased the land, I should anticipate that they would not sell it out in small holdings, except to those who had the money to purchase it; but that would only apply in a few instances, such as in the case of small tradesmen in the village, and people who had put by a little money. The agricultural labourer would not receive any benefit from that, because he would not have the money to lay down to purchase the land, but might rent it upon a lease.

2827. How do you propose to benefit the agricultural labourer?—By compulsory leasing, not by purchase.

Chairman—continued.

2828. What do you mean by compulsion?—I would compel the landlord to lease land for 20 or 30 years to the local authority for small holdings, if not obtainable by leasing.

2829. In the first place you propose, I understand, that the landlord should be compelled to lease to the local authority; then do you propose that the local authority should be compelled to lease to the tenants?—Yes.

2830. And is the local authority to be compelled to lease to any tenant who wants the land?—Certainly not.

2831. How would you work your compulsion; how would you provide that the local authority should have any discretion, and at the same time should be compelled to lease; I gather from your silence that you have not considered that?—No.

2832. Have you worked a small holding yourself?—No.

2833. Have you any experience of the workings of small holdings by others?—Yes.

2834. So far as your experience goes, have they been uniformly successful?—Yes, I do not know any failures to my own knowledge just now.

2835. In your own district are there many small holders?—No, there are a few in each village; probably two or three; if the village is rather large there may be four or five; it varies according to its situation.

2836. Are you speaking of those men in your district when you say that they have been successful, or of others?—I am speaking of these men.

2837. Can you give us any illustrations of the small holdings within your knowledge?—Yes. I have one here; Mr. Charles Renshaw. He rents under the Rev. D. Sitwell, the vicar of Leamington-Hastings, as a trustee in the ecclesiastical district of Broadwell. This is seven miles from New Bilton, where I live, and I know the man quite well, and know all his family; indeed, I know pretty well everybody in the village. He has a small carrier's business; he comes to Rugby twice a week with a carrier's cart; and besides that he rents upwards of 40 acres of arable and grass land, which he holds upon a lease for 10 years at 25 *s.* an acre. This land was in a shocking state of cultivation when he took it, so much so that the previous tenants declared the land was worn out. Mr. Renshaw has, however, so much improved the land by labour, manure, and cultivation that he tells me that this last year he had an average of 15 bags (we reckon it by bags in our part of Warwickshire), or 45 bushels of wheat per acre. His landlord has assured him that he could have hardly believed it possible that such a change could have been brought about in so short a time, and that he was one of the best tenants upon the estate.

2838. Now in this case, I suppose, here are buildings upon the farm?—Yes, there are some buildings, little hovels, on the estate, some of which the tenant built; and there is a barn against the house in which he lives.

2839. The tenant has not put up any buildings has he?—I do not think he has; he has only had it about seven years in that case, if I remember rightly. I find the tenant has built some of the buildings himself.

2840. Is he doing well?—Yes, very well; and he

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Chairman—continued.

he says that any man can do well on a small holding when he has had a start; it is the start that is the difficulty.

2841. Has he borrowed the money to work the farm?—I cannot say. I have not asked him, but I do not think he has; he is a very steady man, and his family, and I think his brothers work with him and assist him.

2842. He and his family practically work the farm themselves?—Yes; I believe so.

2843. In any scheme for increasing the number of small holdings, how would you get over the difficulty as to the buildings. If, for instance, the local authority purchase or lease a large estate for the purpose of creating small holdings by dividing it up, there would not be, upon such an estate, buildings enough for each holding, of course?—No. Then I would let the tenant, if he wished, build what buildings he required himself.

2844. But the tenant would not do that on a lease, would he?—Yes, he would on a lease, provided, of course, that he was properly secured compensation for any buildings he put up, or any improvements he made to the land.

2845. You would not think it necessary to compel the local authority to erect buildings as well as to find the land and the money?—No. That would not be necessary, because in some cases the small holding would perhaps be half-a-mile from the village, and, say it was a holding of 10 acres, and the man was running two or three cows, all he would want would be a shut-up shed to drive his cows into for milking and other purposes, and a little open one for them to run in and out; and all that he would probably build himself, for numbers of these agricultural labourers are handy men, and would put up such things themselves, and do it cheaply in that way.

2846. Would you think it wise that they should do that upon a lease, or would you prefer that under some system or another they should become the owners of the land?—Of course, if they could become the owner, it would be a good deal better.

2847. Have you thought out any system by which they could become the owners of the land?—No, I have not thought of any system by which they could become the owners. Of course it could be done by the local authorities purchasing the land and then allowing them to pay the money back in a certain term of years, with an increased rental, something being added, to pay off the capital and interest of the loan in a certain number of years, probably 20 years; it might vary according to the circumstances; the repayment of the loan should be made as easy as possible.

2848. You do not think it necessary in every case that the tenant should have a home upon his land?—Not if the tenant would be close to his land. A home upon the land would be a great deal better, but that would be the greatest difficulty at the first start. But there might be a lot of suitable land to be let close to the village, and a man would have his home in the village already, and he would only have a short distance to get to his holding.

2849. You have some other instances of small holdings I think, which you wish to bring before the Committee?—Yes; there is one case in my own parish of New Bilton, that of Mr. Henry Goode. He worked as a cowman on the late J. A. Campbell's, Esq., model dairy farm at Bilton, at the same time that my father worked there; my father worked there for 14½ years. Mr. Goode has always been a very steady industrious man, and he had been able to save a few pounds; he bought, first of all, a small plot of freehold building land in our village at Bilton, and since then he has erected a cottage upon it; that land is his freehold. Then his small holding is nearly a quarter of a mile from that; he has a small holding of about 20 acres of grass land, which he has had for about eight years; the rent of that is 2 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre; the land being within a mile of Rugby, I consider that a very fair and reasonable rent considering its close proximity to Rugby.

2850. Does that include the rates and taxes?—Yes; but it does not include the tithe; there is about 4 *l.* 6 *s.* of tithe, and that is divided, I believe, between the tenant and the landlord.

2851. What stock did he begin with?—One cow, and now he has nine cows, and two young steers, and a horse and cart.

2852. How does he work the land; has he any assistance?—Yes; he has two sons, one 20 years of age, and the other about 17.

2853. Does he do any other work, or does he confine himself to working on his own land?—He confines himself to his own land. He has about half an acre of our charity allotment land altogether divided into two halves, one at one part of the village, and the other at the other part, about a mile apart from each other. He grows his roots upon that, and he told me the other day he would like another 10 acres if he could get it.

2854. What is the next case you wish to bring before us?—There is a case at Hillmorton, near Rugby, that of Mr. John Kilworth. He worked for the Oxford Canal Company for upwards of 32 years, and he left the Oxford Canal Company in 1886. Before that time he, of course, had always been a very steady industrious man, and had saved a little money; he keeps a small shop in the village, and he has his own house and another cottage or two besides, I believe. There was a small holding to be sold less than a quarter of a mile from his home, and he purchased it.

2855. What was the extent of it?—Nine acres.

2856. Do you know what price he gave for it?—Yes; he gave about 51 *l.* an acre for it.

2857. Do you know whether he found the whole of the money?—Of course I have not asked him whether he borrowed some of it, but I should say probably he did. I know he saved a little money, but he probably would have to borrow a little to purchase this land.

2858. Was he able to stock the land?—Yes; he has three cows upon it now, and three young steers, besides pigs and some 40 head of poultry.

2859. Is he doing well?—Yes; he told me that so far as even the poultry were concerned they proved very profitable to him; they well repaid him for the care and trouble which he displayed upon them. The same remark that I made

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Chairman—continued.

made before applies to his land; he told me that he believed that if he could get an acre or two of arable land to enable him to grow a little corn and a few roots, he should be able to make a great deal better thing of it even than he does now, and he believes that a number of other agricultural labourers would be able to get comfortable livings upon small holdings in the same way. His father, I believe, works with him upon this holding.

2860. These two men you have told us of are rather exceptional, are they not?—No; I think not.

2861. You say that they are people of very steady character, very industrious and thrifty men, who have saved money in their previous occupations?—Yes; I know other cases as well. Those probably may be exceptional cases, because a man who had not any money would not have an opportunity of getting the land; that is the reason why they are exceptional.

2862. Those people have obtained land under the present system?—Yes; they have obtained land under the present system.

2863. What is the class of people who cannot obtain land, and who yet, in your opinion, would do well upon the land if they could get it?—Agricultural labourers.

2864. Do you mean agricultural labourers generally, or do you mean that there would be some here and there who would be able to do well?—Not all of them, but a number of them.

2865. Do you think that the great majority of agricultural labourers, if they had opportunities, would be able to take advantage of them and do well?—Not if they did not have any money lent them to start with. It would be only in exceptional cases, like those I quoted, that they would be able to take the land at all.

2866. Besides the case you have given us as illustrations, there are other cases of which you have particulars?—Yes.

2867. I do not think I need ask you about them, unless there is anything particular about them to which you wish to call attention?—I had a letter this morning from the son of the tenant mentioned in the paper before you, namely, Mr. Green of Kineton, and it shows how the men are anxious to advance step by step as they are doing.

2868. What are the particulars of his case?—I will just read the letter if you will allow me.

2869. Will you please do so?—He says: "Anything that I can furnish you with with regard to small holdings I shall be very pleased to do. If you could have let me have your letter yesterday, I should have had time to give you a more detailed account, but I have not got time but to give you a general statement. But if you wish it or if it is of any use to you I will prepare a proper account from the time that we commenced. In February 1886 we (I forgot to state that my father, myself, and my next brother are working together; myself and brother unmarried, and living at home; there are nine of us at home to be provided for, including my father and mother) bought our first horse and cart at a cost of about

Chairman—continued.

18 *l.* At that time we had got about 2½ acres of arable land, which we had just taken to at an auction sale, and we being the highest bidders for that lot it was knocked down to us, and we have paid the same rent for it ever since that time, but we had not got any grass-land whatever. But shortly after the remainder of the farm was sold as grass keeping by public auction. I forgot to add that the whole of the farm had a few years previously been cultivated, but had (as we term it) fallen down, and even now it is let every year; let by auction to mow and go off. We took about seven acres to mow, and that was all the land that we had in our possession till Lady-day 1888. In June 1886 we bought our first cow, and in the following month (July) we bought our second cow, and we did not buy a third till about six weeks ago; but now we have in all five head of cow stock, three horses, nine pigs, and about 70 head of poultry altogether; and since we have commenced we have bought waggons, another cart, chaff machine, corn drill, and various other implements at a cost of about 25 *l.* In March 1888 we took a small farm of 24 acres, 12 arable and 12 grass, and we had to take to everything, crops and ploughing, &c., at a rent of 35 *l.* per annum. That brought the quantity of land in our possession up to about 33½ acres, and a small piece of grass-land belonging to the church was let by auction on a lease of seven years, and we took that at a rent of 4 *l* 10 *s.* per annum for 2½ acres; and now this Lady-day we have taken to nine acres more of grass, and four of arable, at a rent of 1 *l.* per acre. Thus the following is something like the facts: 2½ acres at 2 *l.* 12 *s.*; 7 acres at 9 *l.*; 2½ acres at 4 *l.*; 24 acres at 35 *l.*; 13 acres at 13 *l.*; making a total of 48¾ acres at a rental of 63 *l.* 12 *s.*, so you see that is about 26 or 27 shillings per acre on an average, and then we have our house-rent to pay besides, 8 *l.* per annum. All the land had been done bad, and in consequence it was very poor when we took to it, but in a few years' time we shall have it round." Then he says at the end of his letter that he believes that "it is in small holdings that the future welfare of the agricultural community will have to depend."

2870. You quote that as a case in which a man has gradually progressed from a very small holding to a much larger one?—Yes. I know the man quite well, and the circumstances connected with him and all his family.

2871. You have something to tell us about the village of Grandborough?—Yes.

2872. Do you know that village personally?—I know nearly every person in the village, man woman, and child.

2873. Have the labourers allotments?—Yes.

2874. Do you know what rate they pay for those allotments?—Yes. They pay for the old allotments in what are called "Brook-close," and which are glebe land, four guineas an acre, I believe; but if they pay on the day on which it is due, 25 *s.* per cent. is taken off the rent; but if they miss two or three days they have to pay the full rent, so the trustees tell me.

2875. What is the size of these allotments?—These are mostly half an acre, but one or two tenants

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Chairman—continued.

have an acre or an acre and a-half; for instance, William Newman and Jesse Newman, I believe.

2876. What is the produce obtained from these allotments?—It has averaged, in the "Brook-close," this last year after the rate of 20 bags; that is, 60 bushels to the acre.

2877. Is that more or less than the farmers are obtaining from their land in the neighbourhood? Considerably more; more than twice as much in some cases, I believe.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

2878. Do you say that the average is 60 bushels of wheat per acre?—Yes; one tenant, William Berry, had after the rate of 23 bags; that would be 69 bushels to the acre.

Chairman.

2879. Do these labourers want more land than they have got?—They do.

2880. Why do they want more land; why are not the allotments sufficient for their purpose?—Because they think, if they had a small holding, they would be able to be independent of the farmer, and, in fact, be able to maintain themselves and their families from the land, without having to lose so much time by loss of employment as they do now.

2881. There are, I understand, cases where the labourers already have allotments, and have worked them very successfully, but wanted to go on, and to have small holdings in place of allotments, and to have more land?—Yes.

2882. Do the labourers get regular employment?—No.

2883. Has the employment fallen off?—It has fallen off during the last two or three years. The men would have starved this last winter or two if they had not had the allotments the year before.

2884. Have they made any efforts to get more land?—Yes; they have made a private effort for themselves. I assisted them by advice to make it.

2885. Will you tell us the particulars?—There is a farm at Woolscote called Castle farm, about a quarter of a mile from Grandborough, which has been unlet for several years; and the labourers thought if they could secure some of this land it would be all the better for them, and all the better for the landlady, Mrs. Sutton.

2886. Did they want to get the whole farm?—No, they wanted to get only a portion of the farm, a portion of the arable land which was in a dreadful state of cultivation, as it had been so neglected.

2887. And they applied to Mrs. Sutton, the owner?—Yes.

2888. Did they come to an arrangement with her?—They came to an arrangement with her through her agent, and the end of the negociation was that he agreed to let them 37 acres of this arable land at 1 *l.* 15 *s.* per acre including rates and taxes, upon a lease for five years, and at the end of five years they were to have the opportunity of renewing the lease at the same rate.

2889. How did the labourers manage this business?—They had the land in the fall of the year, 12 months this last autumn, and they set to work at once and cultivated it. When they took it, it was a sight to see the squitch upon this land; it was one mass of squitch as the labourers call it, that is couch grass.

Chairman—continued.

2890. Into what size lots is it divided?—From three-quarters of an acre up to two acres.

2891. The men settled amongst themselves who should take the land?—They formed a committee of eight, I believe, with a secretary and treasurer to manage it, and that committee manages it; they had it cut up into lots, and they drew for the lots.

2892. You say the committee manage it; I suppose by that you do not mean they manage the farming; that is managed by each tenant separately, I presume?—Yes, each man manages his own portion; the committee simply manage the collection of the rent, and are responsible to the landlord for the rent, and for the due fulfilment of the agreement into which they have entered.

2893. How far have they been successful in this case?—They have been very successful indeed; they have been so far successful that their average has been after the rate of 15 bags of wheat to the acre, that is 45 bushels.

2894. Has the rent been punctually paid?—Yes, the rent has been paid; it has been ready to be sent, and I believe it has been sent in the first two cases, two days before it was due, and I believe it arrived on the day on which it was due this last time, because I was there on the day on which they sent the rent away.

2895. So far as your experience goes, all of it is entirely favourable to the creation of small holdings?—Yes; I could give you another instance, which I have here, showing how anxious the men are to get small holdings. Take the case of one of these men, Charles Timms, who has a wife and several little children; he has had the proverbial cow for the last three years, but he has not been able to have the three acres, I believe. His employer himself lent him money to purchase a cow three years ago, and charges him 4 *l.* to 4 *l.* 10 *s.* or so a year for allowing the cow to graze upon his land and for fodder. The cow, in the course of those three years, had two calves, and he sold them, and he has got on, and now the cow is his own. To show how anxious he is, with other men in the village, to get small holdings, I may say that a friend has lent this man, and another man, William Berry, the money, and they have taken 11 acres of grass keeping; it was taken last year at 30 *l.*, and the crop of hay off it made 70 *l.*, and they hope to make more out of it this year, so as to get a few pounds to start them with.

2896. In these instances you told us of, the difficulty does not appear to be in getting land, but the difficulty you speak of, as I understand, is the difficulty of getting money to cultivate land?—That is it.

2897. You want to see greater facilities for the cultivation of these small holdings?—Yes.

2898. Have you seen the Bill now before Parliament introduced by Mr. Jesse Collings?—I did not know that he had introduced a Bill this year. I remember his Bill before, in 1885, and I spoke in favour of it.

2899. However, you remember the Bill in 1885, which is practically the same, I believe, except as regards the compulsory clause?—Yes, I see

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Chairman—continued.

I see that the compulsory clause is left out of this Bill. I think that is a mistake.

2900. Taking the Bill as it was in 1885, do you think that it would meet what you desire to see?—No, I do not think it would.

2901. In what way is it deficient?—It would not touch the more numerous class of agricultural labourers who have no capital, but who still cannot find employment.

2892. It would only help those who have a little money of their own, or who are able to obtain a small portion of the purchase-money?—Yes.

2903. Therefore you would have to go further in order to provide for this other class?—Yes.

2094. The class which you want to provide for is the class of labourers who have not sufficient employment and have not any money?—Yes.

2905. You think the only way of providing for them would be by throwing upon the local authority the duty of getting them the land and getting them the money to work it?—Yes, that is the sum and substance of it.

2906. Have you thought whether it would be right for the local authority to do the same thing with regard to other trades; would it be right for the local authority to provide, for instance, a shop for a baker and find him money to carry on his business?—It probably would not.

2907. What is the difference between the agricultural labourer, in your opinion, and a baker?—Of course I should consider that the baker would have quite as much right, if we had no one who could start baking unless they had the money provided by some means or other.

2908. I suppose that a baker would want money to start his business just as much as a farmer?—Just the same I suppose.

2909. Do you not suppose that there are bakers' labourers or apprentices out of employment who would be very glad if the local authority would find money to start them in business?—I have not the slightest doubt they would be very glad if some one could assist them.

2910. What is the difference between the case of the agricultural labourer and the case of the baker?—In the case of the labourers the land would always be there, and the labourer would not make it worse but would enhance its value; that is more than you would have in a business probably.

2911. According to your proposal you would first lend the labourer all the money for the purchase of the land, as I understand?—I am not speaking of purchasing, I am speaking of leasing.

2912. Some one has to purchase the land; the whole money, I understand you to say, has to be found for the purchase of the land. If you do not mean the labourer to have the land, then he has no security in the land to offer. I want to know what security there is for the money you are going to lend to the labourer. You say the land is the security; but, on the other hand, you say the land is not to belong to the labourer, and that he is not to find any money for it; if so he cannot give any security upon the land?—I do not quite follow you.

2913. Suppose we take the case of a labourer, how much land do you suppose he ought to have to work upon?—It depends upon his circumstances and his family. Probably the labourer by himself would start in a small way with three or four acres.

Chairman—continued.

2914. Suppose I take the case of a man with a family, to whom you would give 10 acres of land, what money would he require to be lent to him in order to work that land?—Probably 20 *l.*

2915. What would he do with the 20 *l.*?—He would perhaps purchase a cow to start with.

2916. Then the only security he could give would be the cow?—You might lend him that money upon a term of years for him to pay it back, say in 10 years.

2917. You would not lend 20 *l.* upon a cow, would you?—Not upon a cow alone, certainly.

2918. You say you are going to lend him 20 *l.* in order to buy a cow, which would be the only property that he has?—But he may have other property as well as the cow, or property's worth.

2919. But your supposition is that he is a poor man. If he is not a poor man and has money, he can buy the cow himself?—Certainly.

2920-1. Then we must go back to the case of the poor labourer who has no money, which, I understand, is the class you want to help. The local authority leases him a farm for 10 years at a fair rent; he has no money of his own, and you say that you would lend him 20 *l.* in order to buy a cow; then I point out to you that the only security he has to give for the 20 *l.* you have lent him is the cow; do you think it is safe for a local authority to lend 20 *l.* upon a cow?—No; I should think not upon a cow alone.

2922. Then your scheme breaks down, does it not; for, I suppose, you would not wish the local authority to do what is not safe?—The local authority would not do what is not safe.

2923. Then they would not lend the money?—Probably not.

2924. Then the man would have to go without the land?—He would have to go without the cow or money to start with, but not the land.

2925. Then it comes to this, as I understand, you agree that this could not be done except in cases where the labourer had some money to begin with?—I say there will be numerous classes of labourers who are anxious to get upon the land who would not be able to get upon it unless they were assisted in some way or other. I leave it to others to propose the scheme which would be the safest to assist him. All I am anxious to see is the best scheme for assisting the agricultural labourer.

2926. I want to get at your idea of a scheme that would be safe?—I have not the slightest doubt that in numbers and numbers of cases the men, if they can but get the land, will gradually work their way up themselves.

2927. Am I to understand you as giving up your idea of lending money for the purchase of stock. You say you would not think it safe to lend 20 *l.* for 10 years on a cow that might die the next day, and I quite agree with you in that; but if that is so I understand you would not be disposed to lend any money except upon the security of the land; is that so? Apparently you have not considered that difficulty?—No.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

2928. In those cases which you have mentioned the labourers to whom you have referred had other employments besides occupying themselves

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

on these small holdings, had they not?—Some of them.

2929. Do any of those whom you specifically mentioned live entirely upon their land?—Yes. Mr. Henry Goode in my own village of New Bilton does.

2930. Take the case of the labourers in Grandborough; those men all work for farmers, I suppose?—Some of them.

2931. In the case of those who work for farmers, how much time are they able to give to work upon their own land?—Some of them who work for farmers have growing up sons who work upon the allotment for them a portion of the time.

2932. You mean they do not work upon the land, but their sons do?—They work upon the land part of the time and their sons assist them.

2933. What are the hours of farm labourers in that district?—From six in the morning till half-past five or six in the evening.

2934. Do you mean that they work upon their own land after hours?—Yes, and in some cases they may have a few days off at certain times, when they can work upon their land; there are a number of single young men among the tenants; 16 or 17 are single men, who work the greater portion of their time upon the land for themselves and others.

2935. Was this Castle farm, of which you spoke, at any distance from the houses of those men who worked upon it?—Yes, there were two fields, and the furthest field of the allotments is three-quarters of a mile from the village.

2936. And notwithstanding that they went out to work there after hours?—Yes.

2937. Is the demand, of which you spoke, a demand to hire land?—Yes, to take it.

2938. Not so much to purchase the land, I understand?—No, they see great difficulty in the way of purchase; but what they wish is to get hold of the land by taking it.

2939. To employ themselves upon, so as to make something out of it?—Yes.

2940. You do not think there is any great desire for actual ownership?—Of course, it is a desire with most of them to try and obtain the freehold some time or other; but, of course, at present they do not see any opportunity for that. What they are looking at most is trying to better their condition, and they believe they will be able to better their condition by taking the land if they can but get hold of it.

2941. You think there is a desire for ownership if there were the means of gratifying it?—Yes.

2942. They would not, then, be contented to hire land, but they would wish to become actual owners of it?—Yes, in time no doubt.

2943. How do you suggest that the local authorities in these various cases should arrive at the proper persons to whom to let the land. You say, I think, that every agricultural labourer in a village would not be a proper person to let the land to; there must be some discrimination, I presume?—Yes, there would probably be some who would not be proper persons.

2944. How is the local authority to arrive at who are, and who are not, proper people to let the land to. If you do not understand my question I will put it in this way: The local authority, I suppose, would have to be the local authority of a small district?—Yes; or what would be better would be to have it in each parish.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

2945. In which case those in authority would know all the people residing in the village?—Yes, their circumstances and their character, and everything in connection with them; those who were industrious, and those who were not. I suppose they would use their discretion in the same way as a landlord would do in letting to a tenant a larger farm; he probably inquires whether a man is a suitable tenant to take his land before he lets it to him.

2946. The local authority would have to be a small one?—Yes, a committee in each parish.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

2947. I think you are the son of an agricultural labourer, are you not?—Yes, my father was an agricultural labourer in the early part of his life, and then he worked on the railways when they were made 45 or 50 years ago; and in 1854 he went to work for the late J. A. Campbell, Esq., as an agricultural labourer for 14½ years, and since that time he has been gardener to the late rector of Rugby and the present rector. He died a week last Sunday, 80 years of age.

2948. Practically, you have been acquainted with the land all your life?—Yes, and those living upon it.

2949. Do you know a great many villages. I think I may say 150 villages, in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, and Leicestershire, in all of which you find among the agricultural labourers this desire to have a piece of land to cultivate on their own account?—Yes.

2950. So that, practically, in your opinion, this desire is universal?—Yes, it is; everywhere.

2951. These men want this piece of land as a means of bettering their condition, you say?—Yes.

2952. You would not draw any strict line as to the size of the small holdings, I understand?—No; I would let them begin as low as possible, according to the circumstances, whatever sizes they would like to take.

2953. Supposing that a man and his wife had the means of taking three acres of land, would that be as much as they would want to start with?—Probably it would in some cases; in others they would probably like to take five acres; and in another 10.

2954. Could a man and his wife, without children, manage on three acres or five acres?—Yes; three acres of grass land, and one acre or half an acre of arable land.

2955. Is that so, within your knowledge?—Yes.

2956. Do they do other work?—Yes; some do hedge-cutting by piece-work, and some do draining or other agricultural work.

2957. An agricultural labourer or a village artisan could, you think, carrying on his own occupation at times, but not constantly, manage three acres of grass and one acre of arable, with the assistance of his wife?—Yes; it would fill up his time when he did not obtain employment from the farmer or from other persons.

2958. Taking an agricultural labourer who by some happy chance had saved a few pounds, and two sons we will say, he would be in a position

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

position to take a larger piece, I suppose?—Yes.

2959. How much could he manage?—Probably 20, or 30, or 40 acres. It depends upon the situation, whether it was near his home or whether it was principally grass land, and the quality.

2960. For that reason, you think that there ought to be a progressive increase in the size of the holdings, in accordance with the capacity of the man and his family to do the work?—Yes.

2961. You have known, in some cases, men living upon small holdings of three or four acres, and doing nothing else?—Yes.

2962. The is the case with Mr. Job Goode, of Grandborough, is it not?—Yes; but he was a man who had some money as well to start with, I am told.

2963. I understand that Mr. Job Goode has for years obtained a fair living from three acres of grass land, of part of which he is owner and upon which he has usually kept two cows?—Yes, I believe so.

2964. On that piece of land he has practically lived?—Yes, I believe so.

2965. You say that he also had a little money?—Yes, I believe so.

2966. Supposing he had no money, how much land would he have required to have got his living upon?—Probably 10 acres of grass land with a little arable land.

2967. Supposing a man is not following any other employment, what is the smallest plot of land, in your opinion, on which he could really keep himself and his wife and, say, a couple of children?—Five acres.

2968. With grown-up children he would be able to cultivate an increased holding?—Yes.

2969. You said something about the poverty of the agricultural labourers being a bar to their getting land?—Yes.

2970. Is the rate of wages low in your district?—Yes.

2971. How low is it?—The rate is 12 *s.*, 13 *s.*, and 14 *s.* and 15 *s.* a week.

2972. And out of that the men cannot save any money to better their condition?—No, it is the allotments that keep them now.

2973. It is what they make out of their allotments which practically keeps them from starving?—Yes.

2974. When you mentioned your notion of the labourers being helped on to the land by a loan of money you had, I presume, in your mind the poverty of these men as being a bar to their getting on the land without help?—Yes.

2975. Therefore, you were suggesting that it would be an advantage to the State if they were helped by some such scheme as yours?—Yes.

2976. In that case I think your scheme is that the municipal authority, or the local authority, in the village or district should take land on a long lease?—Yes.

2977. In order to let it to the labourers?—Yes.

2978. They would have to make a careful selection of the labourers?—Yes.

2979. So that practically in giving a labourer five acres or 10 acres of land, and putting him upon it as a tenant, they would give him under the lease the goodwill of the land?—Yes.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

2980. Which would be of some value?—Yes.

2981. Then you suggest that, having put him in possession, he being a man with a piece of land to cultivate, and having the goodwill of the land, the local authority might safely lend him a certain amount of money to help him in the cultivation of it; that is your notion put fairly, is it not?—Yes. I do not think there is one agricultural labourer out of 20 who wants anything in the shape of charity; he only wants to be put in the way of being independent. My knowledge of agricultural labourers is that they want to be as independent as they possibly can.

2982. Now let us take the case of an agricultural labourer who has not been lent any money, but who has saved a few pounds, say, 20 *l.* or 30 *l.*, or who has married a wife who has saved, and the joint savings of himself and his wife amount to 20 *l.* or 30 *l.*, in such a case you think it would be a great advantage to the community if such a man had the opportunity of taking a small farm of 10 acres of land to start with?—Yes.

2983. Supposing that he had 30 *l.* in his pocket, and the local authority let him that land, he would have to have a house and some buildings upon it, would he not?—It depends upon where the land was situated; he would probably have a cottage in the village.

2984. Suppose, for a moment, that he has no cottage, and he is allowed to put up buildings, for what sum could he put up a house and the necessary outbuildings for?—I have been a bricklayer for 14½ years, and speaking from my experience I should say if he had to build, I think it would probably take from 130 *l.* to 180 *l.* to build the house and small outbuildings, as cheaply as he could build them.

2985. If you, for instance, as a practical bricklayer, had to build a house of bricks or stone, it would cost you 180 *l.*, would it?—This is a practical point within my own knowledge, and I should say that if I was placed upon a small holding, as numbers of our labourers are in a rural district, five or six miles away from a railway station, the haulage and cartage of the building material would be considerably greater than if I was close to a town. What I should build would be something like a decent 6-roomed house, with three bed-rooms at least, and a living room down stairs; a rather better room; and then a small back place and a dairy, and a little cowhouse and pig-stye, close to the house; I could not do that for 200 *l.*

2986. A house of three bedrooms and two sitting rooms and a little dairy outside, with cow-sheds, and so on, would want 200 *l.* to build it?—£. 200 *l.* to 250 *l.*

2987. For the actual outlay and materials?—Yes.

2988. Supposing you did it with wood?—We should hardly think, now-a-days, of putting up a house with wood; we might some of the buildings.

2989. I suppose you might make the sheds for the cattle of wood?—Yes; and I know of cases where men have taken the old third-class railway carriages and put them on brickwork a foot or two off the ground. They can get those for about five pounds a-piece, and they use them for sheds.

 2990. Supposing

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

2990. Supposing that you lived in a village close to the land, you think you could put up all the buildings necessary for 30 *l.* or 40 *l.*?—Yes; I could put up all the buildings necessary for 10 acres for that; there would be open sheds for four cows, and a shut-up shed for three or four cows, where they could be tied when they were to be milked, and a little sort of room to put meal and other things of that sort in. That class of man, what we call in the country rough-edge carpenters, would be able to put up sheds of that sort of wood with probably galvanised iron roof, or an asphalte roof, for probably 25 *l.* or 30 *l.*, or even less.

2991. And that would be all they would want upon the ground?—Yes; if they had a cottage in the village near.

2992. In the earlier part of your evidence you read a very interesting letter describing the progressive development of a man who was now holding 48 acres of land; do you know of any other instances of that kind?—Yes; I have a case here of a man who lived in Rugby for a number of years. He was a pointsman on the North Western Railway for a few years, and then he took a few acres of land on what we call our sewerage land. He took land and worked it for a number of years, and my father worked upon it for the tenant before him who had died. The man has gone on gradually rising, and he is as fair a farmer as any in the district, and now he probably rents more than 100 acres. I do not know.

2993. Do you say he began as a labourer?—No, he began as a pointsman on the railway, and he saved money and took a little land, I believe.

2994. How much land did he begin with?—I should think about 8½ acres; that is most arable. Then he took a meadow on the other side of the railway, and then again another meadow, and now he has got a farm upon lease, and it is admitted by many persons that he is one of the best farmers that the landlord there has upon his estate.

2995. Do you know how much money he had to begin with?—No, I do not.

2996. At any rate he began with this very small quantity of land, and by industry and skill he has raised himself gradually till he now occupies 100 or more acres?—Yes; he first of all sold milk to a brother-in-law at Rugby and he gradually got on, and now he has this farm.

2997. In putting these questions before the Committee, what I understand you want to impress upon them is that if opportunities were offered of getting land in small enough quantities, and under suitable circumstances, in holdings of say three acres and upwards, many agricultural labourers (I do not say all) would avail themselves of this chance of rising in life, and eventually becoming prosperous farmers; you have no doubt about that?—I have not the slightest doubt of it. A man came to me only last night who had perhaps 60 *l.* or 70 *l.* He would like from 10 to 20 acres. I have been trying to get him a small holding for a long time, and have been looking out for small holdings, and he cannot get one.

2998. Why not?—Because there is such a demand for small holdings, if one, by any chance, becomes vacant. In the case of one small farm that he, I believe, tried after, the landlord has let it to a farmer who already has a very large farm, and farms that none too well.

2999. Do you think that the tendency of landlords to let the smaller portions of land to men already in possession of larger farms, is one of the obstacles in the way of these small men starting?—Yes; and not only so, but the larger farmers object to it because they think that if the labouring men start with small holdings it will make them more independent of the farmers, and they will be compelled to pay them higher wages than they are paying now.

3000. If there were facilities given for these agricultural labourers and small village tradesmen to acquire land in some way, say in small plots, do you think that would increase largely the rural population of the country, which is now decreasing?—Yes; it is very few villages where you will find the young men willing to stay; they generally flock away to the towns and work on the railways, or join the police force. If, for instance, a gentleman's mansion is built in the neighbourhood they go there and set to work first in helping to get out the foundations, because, probably being drainers on the land, they will be able to use the spade, and then they get on to carrying bricks and mortar to bricklayers, and then they flock off to the town and work there as labourers or builders' labourers.

3001. Do you believe that we should stop that if we gave these men the chance of a career upon the land?—Yes.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

3002. You said just now, in answer to the honourable Member opposite, that you have been acquainted with land all your life, but I thought you told the Chairman that you had no experience of land?—What I said was that I had been acquainted with people who worked the land since I was 14 years old, but I have not been acquainted with the land itself.

3003. To be acquainted with the people who work it is hardly the same thing, is it?—No; but if you go into the houses of small farmers and know them well, and if your friends are working upon the land, and if you are constantly going into the labourers' cottages and come across hundreds and hundreds of instances, you get some knowledge of what are their wants and what their grievances are in connection with the obstacles which are placed in the way of getting on, either upon the land or in other ways.

3004. What is this charity allotment land which you speak of?—That is the common term for land which belongs to a charity; we have about 47 acres of it in my own parish of Bilton. That is land that has been left to the parish. I am one of the trustees of that land; it is just in the centre of the village of Old Bilton.

3005. What is that land let at?—It used to be let at 2 *l.* an acre, but we reduced the rent to 30 *s.* an acre. We have periodical meetings of the trustees; we had a meeting, for instance, about a month ago to let two or three pieces of land, and we had a greater number of applicants that we had pieces of land to let.

3006. There

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

3006. There was a great demand for it, was there?—Yes, very great.

3007. Are there large farms in the district of which you speak?—Yes, some of them are very large.

3008. Have the people there suffered much of late years from agricultural depression?—Yes, some of them. Two or three farms have been thrown into one, and that has been in my opinion a great mistake.

3009. In regard to the allotments, I suppose, as a rule, they are held by men earning wages; but do you think that the small holdings would pay sufficiently well to enable the owners to dispense with the earning of wages?—As I have pointed out to the men who have an acre of allotment, the pinch would be the first year or two, and the pinch in the case of the small holdings will be for the first year or two; but they would gradually get beyond that; and then, I believe, they would be able to live upon the small holdings.

3010. Have some of these men whom you describe as wanting to take land, or wanting more land, saved money?—Some of them had, but some of them not as agricultural labourers; they would have originally come from the villages into the towns, and would have worked at other work there, and saved a little money; or perhaps they may have a little money left them by a friend or relative.

3011. Those cases, of course, would be favourable ones, but as I understand, you contemplated the cases of men who were out of employment and who had no capital, being assisted to get holdings?—Yes.

3012. I understand you to suggest, in answer to the Chairman, that the local authority was not only to provide the land, but also the money to work it. I suppose you recognise that the local authority would have to make the transaction pay?—Yes, they would have to make it pay, certainly.

3013. The transaction would be worked with public money, would it not?—Yes.

3014. Then, undoubtedly, the local authority would have to make the transaction pay?—Quite so.

3015. In the earlier part of your evidence you spoke of an agitation upon this subject; I suppose there were meetings held and speeches made about it?—Yes, there have been all over the district, for the last five years.

3016. Was the plan you mentioned, of a landowner being obliged to give land to the local authorities and they being compelled to lease it out to the labourers, the plan that was recommended by those who spoke upon the subject at those meetings?—I cannot say that it was, but the prevailing feeling that I have found wherever I have gone is, not to purchase the land, but a wish to be able to take the land upon lease, if they can. Of course, if they take it as they take their allotments it is only a yearly tenancy, and that does not give them sufficient confidence to put in enough labour or to set fruit trees or things of that sort, which it would take three or four years before they would see any profitable result from. That is why they want to see the land taken upon lease, and in that case also the expenses would be smaller than if it was purchased, because they would have to pay the interest upon the purchase-money if they bought it.

3017-18. What was the method suggested or recommended at these meetings, by which the land could be obtained?—Something upon the system of the Allotments Bill of 1887, only extending the size of the holding.

3019. Was that method of obtaining the land through the action of the local authorities suggested at these meetings?—Yes.

3020. Was any explanation given on those occasions as to the money part of the scheme?—Yes.

3021. Was anything said at these meetings as to the security that the local authorities would require, and be likely to get?—Yes, it has I believe at most of the meetings.

3022. You admit that the local authority would have to make the transaction pay, because it would be dealing with public money?—Yes.

3023. What I want you to tell me is, was it explained at these meetings what security the local authority would get if they used the public money in the way it is proposed?—Yes.

3024. Did the speakers at these meetings go into that question at all?—Yes.

3025. What security did they say the local authority would get?—I understand that you are referring to the question of purchase, not to the question of leasing.

3026. Do you mean to say that this agitation was in favour of the purchasing of the land?—There has been an agitation since 1885, when Mr. Collings' Bill was first brought out for purchasing land.

3027. What I am asking you is was any explanation given on these occasions as to the money part of the business?—Yes.

3028. It was to be done by public money; was it suggested at these meetings that the local authority would have to take care that the transaction was a paying one?—Yes, it was pointed out that all the expenses in connection with obtaining the land would have, of course, to be borne by the tenant, and that was felt to be, as it undoubtedly would be in the case of purchase, very heavy. It would in fact debar a number of agricultural labourers from being able to get any land because the expenses would be so heavy, and it would increase the rent so much.

3029. But was it represented that the interposition of the local authority would make all that easy.—No. Of course the tenants would eventually have to pay; but the local authority would be able to obtain the land upon better terms than what the labourers would be able to do themselves.

3030. I suppose the idea was that the local authority would have plenty of money at its disposal?—No, I do not think so. I do not think that local authorities have plenty of money at their disposal.

3031. What money was it represented that the local authority would have at its command?—They would be able to borrow loans for this purpose

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

pose just the same as they are able to borrow for other purposes.

3032. Taking the case described in that letter which you read to us, where the man had in all about 48 acres of land, you would not say, would you, that that was as mall holding at all?—It was a small holding when he first took it, because he only had three acres, but he has gradually gone on and got it up to 48 acres.

3033. But he only began in 1886, did he not?—Yes.

3034. Surely he must have had a good deal of capital?—He had a little money lent him by a friend I know, because the first cow he bought was called by a certain nick-name, which I need not mention, and the man was twitted about it; but it was a mistaken idea. However, I do know that the man received a little assistance. I know that the man is working very hard and is doing very well now.

3035. Surely if he has increased his holding in three years from three acres to 48 acres, he must have had a considerable capital to begin with, or he must have had some capital lent him?—He has had some little lent him.

3036. You do not rely upon that case as one upon which you could found an argument to show that an agricultural labourer can gradually rise and increase his holding, although he has no capital?—No.

3037. And, I presume, you would admit that that other case of the man who had been a pointsman on the railway, and who had saved some money, was not a case of a labourer without occupation and without capital?—No, it was not.

3038. And so again in the case of the man you mentioned, who came to you with 60 *l.* or 70 *l.*; that is not a case in point, is it?—No. That man has worked as a shepherd for various farmers all his life, until a few years ago, when a relative died, I believe, and left him a little money among his family, and I think 60 *l.* or 70 *l.* was his share of it; and now, as I say, he is anxious to get upon some land for himself.

3039. We should, of course, all think that a most hopeful case; but that is not a case like that which you mentioned before, of labourers without capital to start them?—No, certainly not.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3040. You were asked, a short time ago, with regard to a pointsman and a shepherd who were able to acquire land by means of their savings; has the agricultural labourer, as a rule, any oppertunity of saving money sufficient to acquire a small holding?—I can answer that by referring to the case of my own father. He had nine of us beside our mother and himself to keep on 13 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, and he had no chance to save money out of it.

3041. But the men who go to other employments, who go for instance on to the railway, and so on, would have a chance, you think, of saving money?—Yes; by going into the towns they of course get higher wages.

3042. Do you consider the agricultural labourer

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

worse off than the men who go to the towns?—Yes; in some cases.

3043. You consider the general condition of the agricultural labourer in your district to be worse than that of any other men of the labouring class, as a rule?—Yes, during the last two years; before that they would probably be better off than some of the labourers in the town.

3044. So far as the income from wages is concerned, do you consider that they are worse off than the other labouring classes?—They would have been a great deal worse off had it not been for the allotments. To put it plainly, if they had depended simply upon the agricultural wages which they were earning from the farmers they would have been worse off, and considerably worse off.

3045. I think you said that the average rate of wages was about 12 *s.*, or 13 *s.* or 14 *s.* a week?—Yes; in a few isolated cases it is 15 *s.*

3046. Is there any guarantee of continuous employment to the men?—No; the farmers send them home on wet days.

3047. Have you any idea what the average rate of wages would be all the year round?—Taking all the year round for 30 labourers out of 50, it would not be much more than 9 *s.* a week.

3048. And I presume things are not so cheap in your district that upon 9 *s.* a week a man can save money sufficient to take a small holding?—No; I do not see any other hope for him, except the workhouse in his old age.

3049. But you say that the condition of the labourer has improved through the allotments?—Yes.

3050. Have the allotment holders, as a rule, been able to save any money?—Some of them have; some of them are saving a few pounds now. In the case of the man I mentioned who has got a cow, he wants land to put it upon, for instance; and there are a number of instances where men are saving a few pounds from the produce of their allotments in addition to the wages which they receive.

3051. These men by means of the allotments are gradually accumulating a little capital?—Yes.

3052. And capital's worth in the shape of pigs?—Yes, in the shape of pigs and corn, and different things.

3053. Do you consider that this is a class of men to whom small holdings should be given?—This is the class of men I should like to see, as far as I am concerned, have holdings.

3054. Do you think it would be safe for the local authority to let these men have small holdings?—I think it would be.

3055. Would not their savings form some guarantee for the regular payment of their instalments to the local authority?—Yes, and their home and their connections; the men would not want to run away. I do not believe that agricultural labourers would be like burglars or pickpockets; they would he anxious to stay at home with their families, and better their condition.

3056. A difficulty has been suggested in the questions that have been put to you as to the liability that would be incurred by the local authority,

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

authority, owing to men coming without any capital to take the land, and you have been asked what security they would have. If there were a graduated system of allotments by which men could have one acre, two acres, or three acres, would not the money's worth which would be growing under their care on these small allotments furnish an adequate security, in your opinion?—Yes; that is what I should like to point out, that better cultivation of the land immediately after they take it would be part of the security in itself.

3057. That is the point that I was coming to. You have been asked whether it would be safe for a local authority to lend money upon the security of a cow which might die the next day, and you admitted that it would not be safe; but it would be safe, would it not, for an allotment holder to have money lent to him to the extent of whatever produce he had on the farm, such as pigs and so on?—Yes.

3058. That would form, at any rate, a guarantee for the payment of a fair and equitable rent?—Yes.

3059. The Chairman asked you to explain why an agricultural labourer should have money lent to him upon the stock upon his land, in order to start on a small holding, any more than a baker should have money lent to him to start him in a business; do you consider there is any difference in starting a man as a baker and starting him as a small holder?—I should not regard the two cases at all as a parallel in that respect.

Chairman.

3060. Then, may I ask you, as I have done already, to explain what the difference is?—I should have qualified my answer in the way the honourable Member suggests. In lending money to a person who already had a small allotment, there would be the security of the produce that he had on the allotment, and that would qualify what I said about the cow; he would have the security of the cow as well.

3061. That was not the case you put to me. You suggested that it would be desirable that money should be lent to a labourer who had nothing at the first outset of his taking a small holding; and then I asked you how much money you would lend such a labourer, to which you replied, "20 *l.*" Then I asked you what would he do with it, to which you answered, "He would buy a cow." Then I asked you whether, in your opinion, it would be safe to lend 20 *l.* upon the security of a cow which might die the next day; and you admitted it would not. If you now want to extend your answer in any way you can, of course, do so?—I did not say that the local authority ought to lend the money, I said they might.

3062. I beg your pardon; I certainly so understood you. If you wish to correct your answer, you can do so now. You said these men could not work a holding or get on, unless the local authority were to lend them money?—Unless they assisted them in some way or another.

3063. And, I presume, by money; that is the only way in which they can assist them?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

3064. Then I asked you this question, and I will repeat it; and if you have anything to add to your answer you can do so now: I asked how much you thought the local authority should lend to such a person, and you said, "20 *l.*" Then I asked what the man would do with that money when he had got it, and you said, "He would buy a cow"?—Probably he would; but I do not know.

3065. Then I asked whether you thought it a safe transaction for the local authority to lend 20 *l.* upon a cow, the borrower having no other property of any kind, according to your supposition; do you wish to add anything to the answers you gave me?—I cannot say that the man would buy a cow with the money. I do not know what he would do with the 20 *l.* He probably would want to spend it in other ways upon his land, and would not buy a cow.

3066. In whatever way he spent it I should still have to ask the same question; whether you think it would be a safe transaction; I do not ask whether it would be right on other grounds, but whether it would be a safe transaction for the local authority to lend money upon such a security as that?—Probably a man with 20 *l.* might put up some shedding, or put 20 *l.* worth into improving his land, and then there would be security; because the land would be 20 *l.* worth better than it was before.

3067. You think that if, for instance, a man were to put this 20 *l.* into manuring his land, it would be safe for the local authority to lend him 20 *l.* on the manure he had in the land; is that what you wish to represent?—The improved state of the land which would be benefited by the manure he had put on, would help to be a better security for the money.

3068. Do you wish to add anything to your former answers?—You asked me whether I would lend 20 *l.* upon a cow. I would say drop the cow subject altogether, and let the man get hold of the land, and leave him to provide his cow or whatever else he chooses, himself. All I am anxious for is, for the labouring man to be able to get a little land, and he will devise some means of getting his cow afterwards if he wishes to.

3069. That is quite a different proposition. I understand you to say now that you would be perfectly satisfied to give these men facilities for getting the land; and that you withdraw altogether your proposition for lending them money?—Yes; you should not put it simply as if the man would not use the money for any purposes except buying a cow.

3070. But if you take anything else than the cow, I should still have to ask you whether you think it would be safe to advance upon such a security. I have asked you, for instance, whether you would think it safe to advance upon the manure?—I would ask you to withdraw the point about lending the man any sum at all.

3071. You give up, as I understand, altogether your proposal that any money should be lent to these impecunious labourers?—Yes, in the way you put it; all I say is, let the impecunious labourer get hold of some land; let him take it as tenant, or in any way which may be best.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3072. The point I was leading up to was this: that although it might not be safe for the authority to lend money to a man without any holding for the purchase of a cow, it would be safe for the authority to incur responsibility with respect to land which should be let to the agricultural labourer, especially if that man should have an allotment of an acre and some little capital, or something that was represented by capital?—Yes, I can give an instance of that kind where a man who has taken some grass-keeping has given security for the advance, and he has three months to pay the amount off to the auctioneer for the grass keeping; and he has given as security, I believe, the crop he has upon the allotments now.

3073. I asked just now whether there was any margin left to the men employed simply as hirelings (I do not use the word in an offensive sense), as agricultural labourers; there is not a margin; is there?—No.

3074. Is there usually a margin over the cost of living in the case of those who have some allotment land?—Yes.

3075. Therefore the allotment holders become small capitalists?—Yes, entirely.

3076. Mr. Lowther asked you what system should obtain on the part of the local authority in selecting a tenant; do you think it would be wise to take as tenants of small holdings those who have allotments?—Yes.

3077. And who have, as I understand, proved by their industry, that they are fit persons?—Yes; as I say, those who have shown, by their characters and also by the way in which they have cultivated their present allotments, that they are worthy of having an extension.

3078. So that there would be the guarantee of character as well as the guaratee of their savings as a security for the payment of the annual instalments for these small holdings?—Yes.

3079. You told us of the case of a neglected farm, where 37 acres were taken by a committee of management?—Yes; I remember all the circumstances.

3080. You said that this land was let at 1 *l.* 15 *s.* an acre?—Yes; it is let to labourers.

3081. That includes rates and taxes?—Yes.

3082. What would be represented by the rates and taxes?—Probably about 2 *s.* 6 *d.* an acre.

3083. Would the difference, that is 1 *l.* 11 *s.* 6 *d.*, represent the whole rent to be received for this 37 acres?—Yes.

3084. This land was entirely out of cultivation?—Yes.

3085. You say it was as full as it could be of couch grass?—Yes; I believe they would have let the whole farm for less than 1 *l.* an acre if they could have got a tenant.

3086. What would the next farm to it let for per acre?—£. 1. 5 *s.* up to 2 *l.*, I believe. I will not be certain about the rent on the next one; but I know there is some land in the same parish been let at 15 *s.* an acre.

3087. And you say that this land is now in a good state of cultivation?—It is getting to it; it will be in the course of another year, as the men re getting the foulness out of it. Of course last year was only their first year; they did wonders in the time, and so much so that they have been constantly jeered by the farmers. The farmers call these allotments the "gold diggings," but, as the men say, it was the squitch diggings.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

3088. It has turned out, however, to be gold diggings at last?—It will do so.

3089. I understand you to say that there is considerable difficulty (and I thought you gave a conflicting answer with regard to this point) in getting land in your neighbourhood?—Yes, for small holdings.

3090. But I also understood you to say in reply to another question, that there was no difficulty in getting land?—There is a difficulty in getting land for small holdings; they cannot get it at all; I have mentioned the case of a man whom I know would be glad to get it, and he cannot.

3091. Is there a jealousy on the part of large farmers towards small holdings?—Yes, I believe there is.

3092. And on the part of the landowners?—I do not know. Of course, as a rule, in my part of the country the landowners seem to sympathise with the farmers more than they do with the labourers or those that want small holdings, which is a mistake. I think it would be better if they sympathised with the small holders or labourers.

3093. Do you think there is any such system by which land can be obtained for small holdings other than by compulsion?—Yes, I think it can be obtained voluntarily by lease.

3094. I thought you said just now that it could not be obtained for small holdings voluntarily?—I meant to qualify that; in any Bill that is introduced there should be compulsory powers to lease as well as purchase.

3095. You are speaking now of the local authority being a tenant as well as owner?—Yes; because I think there are a number of landlords who would then let land voluntarily if they knew they would be compelled to let it upon a lease.

3096. Do you think there is any prospect of small allotment holders ever becoming small holders under the small holding system, unless there is some compulsory power in the Act for the local authorities to acquire lands?—No, I do not think there is for many.

3097. You think it would be a mistake to drop out of any Small Holdings Act compulsory powers? I think it is a very serious mistake, indeed.

3098. In your opinion has the Compulsory power of the Allotments Act been of any service?—It has had a very great moral effect, because the landlords have readily come forward now who would not before. It has not been acted upon in any case I know of, but it has had a moral effect.

3099. You think that the landlords, knowing that at last they might be compelled to give up land, have come forward voluntarily to do it?—Yes; it has tended in that direction a great deal.

Sir *George Campbell.*

3100. Have you any land yourself?—No, I have not any.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

3101. Do you think that tradesmen, bricklayers, and bakers' apprentices, and so on, could hold small holdings as advantageously as agricultural labourers?—Yes, I think they could, because those who have small holdings in their hands now are the small village tradesmen, such as butchers, innkeepers, and bakers.

3102. You think that they could, even more advantageously than agricultural labourers, hold small holdings?—Yes, because they have a little capital.

3103. Do you think that people of that class would rather own land or rent it?—I cannot say; they do own a little land now, some of them; and it is the tendency of everybody to try to get a little more and a little more, and so on, if he can; but numbers of them rent it. I have a relative now who is an innkeeper in a village who has a small holding of about 10 acres; he would like to take a little more if he could, but he is not in a position to purchase.

3104. Are the large farmers in a bad way in your part of the country, or are they pretty well able to hold their own?—In one case I am told a farm that used to be three or four farms years ago, which is now thrown into one farm; and it is not nearly so well cultivated as a large farm as it was in small farms; and the men say that there were more men employed upon one of the small farms than there are upon the large farm now they are all thrown together.

3105. Was it thrown into one farm because those small farmers failed?—I do not know. Some of them were old tenants; and as they died I should suppose that the landlord (who was the late Duke of Buccleugh) or his agents probably let them, for the sake, probably, of convenience in collecting the rent to a tenant who had already a farm on the property, and who wanted a larger one.

3106. Are the large farms in your part of the country prosperous or unprosperous just now?—I do not know; I have hardly heard farmers say a time when they were prosperous.

3107. Has a landlord any difficulty in getting a tenant now?—No, he has not very much difficulty in getting a tenant now. There was a difficulty three or four years ago; but now it is getting back to be as it was 10 or 12 years ago, when there was always plenty of applicants for land, and farmers ran up the rents. Since then they have asked for the rents to be reduced.

3108. In your part of the country I understand there is not a tendency, as there is in some parts, on the part of landowners, to let small farmers take their land on the small holding system?—No.

3109. I understand you to say that these allotments generally grow wheat and get as much sometimes as 60 bushels, or an average of 45 bushels to the acre?—Yes.

3110. Is that all cultivated by spade labour?—Yes, all, I believe.

3111. They cannot cultivate wheat every year of course; what do they rotate?—If they have an acre they would probably have one year half an acre of wheat, and then beans and potatoes, and then again barley. Of course they change the crop; what they set to potatoes one year they set to wheat the next year; and what they set to wheat that year they set to beans the next year, and so on.

3112. Do you think it pays to grow wheat by spade labour?—Yes, they find it pays them.

3113. What is 45 bushels worth to a farmer now?—I do not know what the price of the market is, whether it is 33 *s.* or what it is.

3114. Forty-five bushels would be under six quarters; that would be worth under 9 *l.*, would it not?—Yes; about 9 *l.*

3115. Do you think it would pay to cultivate, by spade labour, an acre, and manure it as we know it requires to be manured, to get 45 bushels?—Of course, a small allotment does not look to paying in that way; so far as that is concerned, it is valuable as finding a man employment at the time he is not employed by the farmer. It makes up the difference then. If you add that to his wages, which would be on the average probably 9 *s.* or 10 *s.*, and then add what he makes from his land, it brings him up to what he would make if he were working for a farmer all the year round, perhaps.

3116. But I understood you to say that when an allotment holder gets a little beyond an allotment he can live on, say, five acres of land with his family?—Yes.

3117. What would be cultivated upon the five acres, so as to live upon it?—He would have his allotment just referred to, and he would have his grass land to supplement it; and step by step he would get from having one cow to having two, perhaps, and a few sheep and poultry, which he is not able to do now; as a rule, upon allotment land, for he is not able to build even a pig-stye.

3118. Do you think that without any other employment he could live upon five acres and find employment for himself and his family?—In putting it at five acres I meant a married man and his wife. I was not taking a man with a family; he would require a larger quantity if he had a family.

3119. Would a married man and his wife find sufficient occupation upon a plot of five acres?—I think so.

3120. Supposing a man got on to a ten-acre plot would he then have a plough?—I am supposing ten acres with arable land.

3121. You are supposing it to be mostly grass land?—Yes.

3122. Still I understand you to say you think he could live upon it without a plough and without horses?—Yes, I know of cases; I can quote one of Mr. Samuel Norton, at Radway, where he and his son have only a small portion of allotment land, and he has some grass land, probably about 10 acres; he owns a little plot of half an acre together with his house in the village. He has, as I say, a grown-up son of 18 years, and they are living on that land, I believe.

3123. Then as regards the advancing of money to enable a man to set up as a small holder I understand you to say that you would not advance money to any labourer, however impecunious he might be, unless he was an industrious man, of prudent character?—If I was lending a man even 5 *s.* I should consider who the man was before I lent it him.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

3124. Would it not be possible for a single able-bodied agricultural labourer on 13 *s.* 6 *d.* a week to save a few pounds if he was a saving man, to get a small farm?—If his wife was able to do something considerable in the way of helping him perhaps he might; but in some cases it is not so. My father, for instance, was as steady and hard working a man as ever lived in this country, and he was not able to save any money.

3125. Still, as I understand, you would confine the advances of money to cases where the man had already a little money of his own and bore a prudent character?—It would be a different case then; a man who has 20 *l.* would always be able to borrow another 20 *l.* Of course a man with nothing at all, or the other hand, would find very few friends who would care to lend him money.

3126. Do you think that if a man had nothing at all and none of his friends would be willing to lend him anything, it would be prudent for the local authority to lend him anything?—He might not have any money, but if he had an allotment there would be the crops upon the allotment as a security.

3127. You think it would be prudent to lend to a man to the amount of the value of the crops he had on his allotment?—Yes, or even a little beyond.

3128. Then as regards the buildings; there are parts of the country where there is a system under which a man builds certain buildings of his own, and those buildings are valued at the end of the lease; do you think that such a system would answer?—Yes; if the man, on giving up his holding was compensated for any outlay that he had been put to at his own expense in erecting buildings.

3129. In that case you think he might erect the buildings himself?—Yes; of course he would erect his buildings to suit his own case, and they might not do for the tenant who followed him. The next tenant might want to enlarge them, for instance.

3130 As regards the agricultural labourers you said that the farmers send them home on wet days; are we to understand that they are employed by the day only, and not by the week or month, in your district?—The generality of them are. They used to be employed by the week, but during the last few years it has been by the day in my part of the country.

3131. And on wet days they get no wages?—They get no wages.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

3132. I understand you to say that you have been asked on several occasions to obtain small holdings for people who are looking out for them; in what capacity were you asked to do that?—I have been asked by the men themselves.

3133. Do they come to you as representing a society?—No, they have asked me to look out for small holdings when I am going about the country; as I am constantly doing.

3134. On what business are you going about the country?—As a registration agent.

3135. Have you ever been a member of any

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

local authority; for instance, a board of guardians?—No; I am an overseer of the poor in my parish, and have been for several years.

3136. Have you any experience as to the facilities granted now in the case of local authorities for borrowing money; do you know at what price local authorities would be able to borrow?—No.

3137. You have not thought about the rate at which it would be possible to let land to labourers if the money were advanced by the State?—Yes, I have thought about it.

3138. What is your opinion as to the rate at which you would have to borrow the money?—My opinion is that in a great many cases the land would not be able to be purchased so as to be let at a reasonable rent whereby a labourer would be able to make that living that he ought to make upon the land. The purchase-money and the interest upon it, and the expenses would be so great that it would be a bar.

3139. In this little farm that you spoke of at Grandborough, is the cultivation all spade husbandry?—It is all spade husbandry, I believe.

3140. Do you think that a man with his family would be able to live upon five acres if he were to do nothing else?—Not straight off, perhaps.

3141. Do you think that five acres would keep a man, apart from other employment?—No, I do not think it would.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

3142. Of course, the amount of land which is sufficient to support a man depends very much upon the quality of the land. For instance, five acres of very good land would support a man and his family well; and five acres of bad land would not?—Of course the man would have to work up the land and bring it into a good state of cultivation before he could succeed.

3143. The size of holding necessary would really depend, would it not, upon the quality of the land?—Yes.

3144. You spoke just now about these men growing wheat on small holdings with spade labour in your neighbourhood; what do they do with the wheat; do they sell it?—They use a great portion of it.

3145. For feeding cattle?—No, for making bread for themselves and their families.

3146. Who threshes it?—They have a machine; it is all threshed together. and it probably in that way costs them 4 *s.* or 5 *s.* each. They hire a machine for a day or for two days, as the case may be. Taking the case of Grandborough, for instance, one of the farmers in the district has a threshing machine, and he goes about threshing for the other farmers; when his machine is in their neighbourhood they fix a day which is convenient, and have it down on their allotments and thresh the wheat there.

3147. And then they take it to the millers, I suppose?—Yes, they have it ground, and then make it into bread or use it for the pigs.

3148. Therefore, they save the baker's bill?—Yes; they consume what they grow.

3149. That is an element of great advantage, is it not, in the case of small holdings?—Yes.

3150. In

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Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

3150. In speaking of the local authority, what do you understand by a local authority; in other words, whom do the local authority represent?—The local authority represents the boards of guardians; and, probably, they will represent the district council and the county councils eventually.

3151. They represent the ratepayers, do they not?—Yes.

3152. And it is the money of the ratepayers they have to deal with?—Yes.

3153. About how many ratepayers are there in your parish?—I could hardly tell; ours is an ecclesiastical district of the mother parish.

3154. Taking a parish with 500 ratepayers; how many do you suppose of the inhabitants of that parish would be able to take advantage of the facilities for small holdings if they were offered to them; what percentage of the population would be suitable for getting small holdings if facilities were offered?—Do you mean by purchase?

3155. I mean in any way by means of the local authority?—Probably 10 per cent.

3156. Then supposing there are 500 ratepayers in the parish, there would be 50 of them who could take advantage of those facilities?—Yes.

3157. If you were a member of a local authority representing the ratepayers, and having to disburse the money of the ratepayers, should you think it right to make any investment that was not absolutely secure when you were dealing with the money of the ratepayers?—I do not suppose that the ratepayers would let me represent them very long if I did.

3158. In other words you do not think that the 450 ratepayers in the parish we are supposing would allow you to run any risk with their money for the sake of the 50 who want small holdings?—I do not think they would.

3159. Do you think they would be right in so doing?—I should think that the majority ruling, as they do in other matters, would be right in that.

3160. We make take it that it is useless to advocate either here, or at meetings, or before the men themselves, any scheme whatever that does not provide absolute security to the ratepayers?—I do not go so far as that.

3161. Let me put it in another way; is it likely that any scheme of that kind will be ever carried out unless the ratepayers are secure so far as their money is concerned?—I cannot say.

3162. Do you think it likely that in any parish of 500 ratepayers they would consent to allow their representatives to use their money in a scheme that you could not prove to them was free from loss, for the sake of the 10 per cent. of them who would be benefited?—I am not discussing whether the object is good or bad; but do you think it likely that any scheme, however good, could be carried out except on the condition of security to those who bear the expenses?—I do not think it is likely.

3163. You would recognise that no scheme would be practicable unless that element of security was in it?—Of course the scheme would be

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

practicable; but they would not be so secure as in that which you have mentioned.

3164. What I mean by practicable is not only one that could be passed into an Act, but one that could be put in operation?—Yes, it should be one that can be put in operation.

3165. And for that reason the element of security, so far as the ratepayers' money goes, is essential?—Yes.

3166. Now, with regard to the agricultural labourers, if there were facilities placed before the rural labourers for getting land provided they could save a small amount of money, do you think with regard to young labourers that would not be an inducement for them to save?—Probably it would.

3167. Let me take a case: supposing there were, we will say, 100 *l.* worth of land, about three acres, and a labourer or anyone else had the power of buying that land by paying a fourth down, which would be 25 *l.* to the local authority, that would leave remaining 75 *l.*; supposing that were to be advanced by the local authority as a perpetual charge or loan at 4 per cent., that would be 3 *l.* per annum; if the labourer had an opportunity or prospect of getting three acres of land on the condition that he could save 25 *l.* to pay down, pay 3 *l.* per annum for evermore for the three acres, he becoming owner, subject to the payment of 3 *l.* per annum, do you think that that would be an inducement to him to save?—I think it would.

3168. And you will also perhaps admit that the local authorities having had 25 *l.* paid down, that will provide that element of security without which we agreed it would be no use proposing any scheme; in other words, the local authority would be secure, and it would be easy terms for even a labourer to secure this land as practically his own freehold, subject to a quit-rent of 3 *l.* a year?—Yes; but with regard to the instance you have mentioned, in which you assume that he would get three acres of land for 100 *l.*, I may say that in our parish we cannot buy any for less than 80 *l.* or an 100 *l.* an acre. There would be very few cases in which they would be able to get the land on such reasonable terms as 100 *l.* for three acres.

3169. I merely take 100 *l.* worth of land as an illustration; the same principle would apply in either case?—Yes.

3170. You said, I think, that small holdings were very difficult to get?—Yes.

3171. But is it difficult, supposing a man had the money, to buy large tracts of land?—No: there is plenty of it in the market.

3172. Then if the local authority had power to buy a large farm, and cut it up into various sized holdings, that would be the creation of small holdings, and that would get over your difficulty, would it not?—It would get over it in some instances.

3173. It would create small holdings, would it not?—It would get over the difficulty where the man had a little capital; it would not touch those men outside.

3174. I am trying to meet the difficulty, which I quite agree exists with regard to small holdings; supposing that the local authorities should have power to buy a large estate or a large farm, and divide it into plots of the different sizes

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

which you have been suggesting as suitable, have you any doubt that men would be found of the class of labourers whom you describe (for a labourer who goes away to the town to get work is still a labourer for this purpose) to take the holdings under those conditions I name?—There would be found men to take them up, the same as there are men found now to build themselves cottages where they have the freehold of the land, and a building society lends them the money to build the cottage.

3175. You think it would be far better for them to pay a per-centage on the money which would be lent, under a system which would secure them absolute and perpetual tenure than paying the rent to a landlord?—I do not believe in a man holding land on a yearly tenancy; he should have it upon lease, if anything. I presume you would also give a man an opportunity of purchasing his holding entirely; that is, supposing a man after he had had his holding five years, had been able to pay 25 *l.*, you would give him facilities for paying off another 25 *l.*, I presume.

3176. No, the proposition is to lend the money at so low a rate of interest that there would be no advantage to him in paying off the capital. He would be the freeholder entirely; subject to this quit-rent; he could sell the land or dispose of it in any way?—Would you not let the man as he advanced in prosperity purchase the freehold entirely?

3177. That is not the proposition. Let me ask you, is it wise after having assisted a man to become a cultivating owner to allow him to sub-let and become a landlord; would you be willing that a local authority should assist a man on a farm and then give him permission instead of cultivating that farm to sub-let it?—No, I would not let there be any sub-letting at all, because it would make two landlords and take away the responsibility from the proper authority.

3178. Would you be willing for the local authority to take power with regard to these farms either by allowing a man always to remain upon it or otherwise, to prevent sub-letting?—There should be power to prevent sub-letting.

3179. Are you aware of any powers at all that could be exercised in the case of a man who became absolute freeholder out and out to prevent him from sub-letting and sub-dividing the land?—Certainly not. If a man purchased his land entirely he would have the right to do what he liked with it; he could sell it again for instance; it would not matter to those whom he purchased it from what he did with it. If I purchased a house by instalments, when I had purchased it, I should have the right to sell it again.

3180. We are speaking of land here, and not houses; and my question is, after having assisted a man to buy a small holding for the purpose of cultivation, while of course he could sell it to another small holder, would you or would you not be willing to take such securities as may be necessary to prevent that man sub-letting it in order to become a landlord?—I do not see how you would get over this difficulty. Supposing the man wanted to go abroad, or was taken ill, and could not cultivate the land himself.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

3181. He would be able to sell it. The question is after you have assisted a man on a farm as a cultivating owner, while you would allow him to sell it or leave it to his children, would you allow him to sub-let it to another man to cultivate it, he becoming in the position of an owner?—No.

3182. As to what you said about friends lending a man money; we have had some evidence before us to the effect that a certain number of labourers by means of saving or borrowing money, or by some legitimate means, will get a small amount of capital; is that your idea with regard to a certain number of them?—Yes; with a certain number it will be so, I know some have a little money in co-operative stores, probably 30 *l.* or more.

3183. So far as regards those labourers who are skilful, or industrious, or provident, or fortunately situated, or whatever you like to call it, they would be able to find a certain amount of deposit money or purchase-money in order to become freeholders?—Yes.

3184. In that respect the Bill to which you have had your attention called would be useful, you think?—Yes.

3185. And at the same time you say it will overcome the difficulty with regard to risking the ratepayers' money. I understand that you think that large tracts of land could be got hold of, though small holdings are difficult to get?—Yes; there are large estates advertised in our neighbourhood all the while.

3186. If the local authorities had the power to purchase, you do not think that there would be much difficulty in purchasing the land?—I do not think there would.

3187. Then where is the absolute necessity to start with a compulsory clause?—I am only answering for parts of my district. There are parts of my district where you would not be able to obtain land, and where the landowners will probably object to sell it for the purpose.

3188. You are anxious to see the men upon the land, I think you said, and I much sympathise with that desire; I presume you would rather have a Bill such as I have been referring to, which would give permissive clauses to the local authorities, than no Bill at all?—Yes, than no Bill at all; but I should like to see compulsory clauses in that Bill, and then it would make it a better one.

3189. I suppose I may take it that if a Bill with permissive clauses was found to be inoperative, that, in your opinion, would furnish a very great additional argument to have compulsory clauses subsequently passed?—Yes.

3190. Does it appear to you, therefore, that it is better to get the one first, if we can do it, and see by experience as to the necessity of a compulsory clause?—So far as my opinion goes, I do not mind whether there is a compulsory clause or not, so long as small holdings are created.

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Mr. J. STANDRING, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3191. WHERE do you live?—At Epworth, in Lincolnshire.

3192. What are you?—I am a small farmer, and hay, straw, and potato dealer, and a collector of rates combined.

3193. Are there a great number of small holdings in your neighbourhood?—A very great number.

3194. Are they freeholders or tenants?—They are freeholders and tenants too. I can give you the acreage of the parish and how it is occupied, if you desire.

3195. Will you please do so?—The acreage of the parish is 5,741, and the number of occupiers of over 200 acres is two; the number of occupiers of between 100 and 200 acres is 12; the number of occupiers between 50 and 100 acres is 14; the number between 20 and 50 acres is 31; the number of between 10 and 20 acres is 40; the number between 2 and 10 acres is 115; and the number between 2 roods and 2 acres is 80. That is how the land is occupied.

3196. So far as your neighbourhood is concerned, there is no lack of small holdings?—No. I have a rough plan here that will show you the facilities that we have for obtaining them. There is an open field of several hundred acres, in plots from one rood up to two acres, and each plot is either freehold or copyhold, with no fence between the plots; there is merely a plough line between them for boundaries.

3197. In your experience have you found that this small ownership is beneficial?—I do very much so. I am a small owner and holder myself, and I find a great benefit from my own small holding.

3198. Is your land freehold?—I have both freehold and copyhold.

3199. May I ask you how did you become the owner of that land?—In the first instance, I married a wife who had three or four acres; and I have bought seven or eight since at various times.

3200. What price did you purchase it at?—I purchased it at from 85 *l.* an acre to 40 *l.* an acre. I would not tie myself to a pound or two; but it would be about that.

3201. Altogether you have about 10 acres?—About ten acres.

3202. Have you any other occupation?—Yes; I am a dealer in hay, straw, and potatoes; and I collect the rates for the parish.

3203. Could you get a sufficient return to live upon out of that land alone?—I could as a labourer out of 10 acres. I may say that wisely or unwisely my expenses are more than an ordinary labourers would be.

3204. I understand that a labourer would make more than he now makes by his labour out of the land?—Upon ten acres of good land an ordinary labourer, if he was an industrious man, would live and bring up a family comfortably; but on 20 acres of bad raw sand he would simply starve.

3205. Do you think that he could do it on five acres?—I do not think so; but I am well

Chairman—continued.

acquainted with one holding of 500 acres, which for many years was tenanted by one man; and he employed about four single men and five or six labourers who lived off the farm, and that land was as rich as ever crow flew over; and had there been buildings upon it, it would have kept 50 families in comfort. I am quite sure about that.

3206. But a holding so small as five acres, unless in very exceptional places, you think would not be enough to support a labourer?—I do not think it would.

3207. In all cases of that kind it would be necessary that the man should have some extraneous means of subsistence?—Yes; in all the cases that I know he has.

3208. Now what do the people do with these holdings. In the first place, what do they grow upon them?—I have a paper here which I took to several such men the other night, and got them either to sign it or to refuse. I went to one of the labourer's houses, and he fetched in about half a score. If you will allow me, I will read to you what I wrote, and what they say:—"We, the undersigned, being agricultural labourers at Epworth, are in occupation of allotments or small holdings, varying from two roods to three acres, willingly testify to the great benefit we find from our holdings. Where we have a sufficient quantity of land to grow two roods each of wheat, barley, and potatoes, we have bread, bacon, and potatoes for a great part of the year, enabling us to meet a long winter without the old dread of hunger or pauperism staring us in the face"; that is signed by about half a score of actual labourers, not one refusing.

3209. Do these men you speak of get their extra employment by labouring on farms?—Yes, most of them are employed on farms constantly. Those two or three acres would be farmed and managed, so far as the hand labour is concerned, by them and their families, at times when they would not be employed upon the farmer's land, such as early in the morning or late at night; and, as regards the wife and family, at various times during the day.

3210. Passing to rather larger holdings, what class of men do you find upon them?—I find a class of industrious men up to 10 acres, many such in our parish keep one horse and a cow and a few pigs. And on some of the stronger land two or three of them will yoke their horses together, and work their own land, and also land belonging to other men similarly situated who do not keep horses.

3211. Have any of those men in your experience done well for themselves?—Yes, as a rule they have. I scarcely know a failure among that class of men in our parish.

3212. I suppose they have to work very hard, have they not?—They work hard, but not so hard as they would if they were agricultural labourers; they feel greatly more at liberty; they are not tied from morning to night, and if they want a day off they can take it.

3213. Are there any special facilities for

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Chairman—continued.

obtaining these small holdings, or is it an ordinary purchase and sale?—There are great facilities for renting in this way: that one owner would in some cases own 20 or 40 or 50 of these small plots, and would be anxious to let to 10 or 20 different people: so far as renting is concerned there is every facility for getting land; and holdings very often come into the market by people going into the towns, or emigrating, for instance.

3214. These freeholds are sold by auction, I presume?—Yes; by auction and private contract.

3215. Are there any facilities in your neighbourhood for advancing money upon the holdings or assisting the tenants to acquire them?—No, except through a friend, or through a solicitor, as is done in many cases. In my own case, for instance, I bought more land than I had the money to pay for. A certain portion I paid then, and a certain portion I have paid up since.

3216. You were able to borrow money upon the freehold after you had obtained it?—Yes.

3217. Have you known instances where these men have done so well as to get on into a larger way of business?—Yes; I can give you instances. I do not believe there is one in 10 in my parish, and in the adjoining parish among those who are renting from 50 to 150 acres, but what, in my time, has been an agricultural labourer or an agricultural servant before he was married; and each of them, to my own knowledge, has commenced with two or three acres, and in some cases not more than one acre.

3218. What do they occupy now?—They rent up to 150 acres; and one man who is now occupying 200 acres was a labourer in his early days.

3219. Do you consider that the production of these small holdings is as great in proportion as that of large holdings?—It is greater, as I know from experience.

3220. Is that because the tenants put more into the land?—It is because they put more labour into it, and the same kind of crops does not come round so often; they change the cropping more often.

3221. Altogether you are extremely favourable to this system?—Yes, I am, indeed. I have known the working of the system from my boyhood, and it has worked well.

3222. And you would desire to see it extended?—I would very much desire to see it extended; as far as our particular parish is concerned we have almost every facility we want now.

3223. But would you desire to see it extended all over the country?—Yes.

3224. Have you considered any proposal for extending the system?—No; I have seen Mr. Collings' Bill; and, Mr. Collings' Bill made compulsory, I, for one, should be satisfied with.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

3225. I think you said that the land in these parts is in large open fields or open tracts?—Yes, a great portion of it.

3226. Divided into small plots, for cultivation, by furrows?—Yes.

3227. The facility which you say is derived from that method for small holdings is due to the

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

fact that a man may take up one, two, or three of them?—Yes, even from one rood up to 10 acres.

3228. Practically, on the same piece of land?—Yes.

3229. Are there many instances of a man beginning with one or two and going up to eight or ten of these little holdings?—Yes; there are dozens of instances in our parish, and a great many of those who are among the larger farmers now commenced in that way.

3230 As regards the pieces of land which have been broken up in this way for the purpose of giving facilities of tillage to the occupiers who cultivate them themselves, are they owned by men who have previously been cultivating owners or by a large landowner?—There is land that has never been inclosed at any time, but there are hundreds and thousands of acres in the parish that are inclosed; the open fields does not extend to a quarter of the land.

3231. Who is the owner of this land?—I should think there are 100 owners, and perhaps more than that.

3232. But in some cases you say they are let?—Yes, in numerous cases; the great bulk is let.

3233. With regard to the people who let these small plots, have they been people who previously cultivated land themselves?—Some of them are, but many of them are females whose fathers have left the land to them, and they therefore cannot cultivate it themselves. In many cases the owners are living away in Sheffield, or London, or other parts.

3234. There has been no system in your district of people buying up plots of land and cultivating them for a time, and then afterwards endeavouring to reap a large rent by letting them, and getting some other people to cultivate them?—No, that is not so.

3235. Are there many of these small freeholders and copyholders in your district who have mortgages upon their land?—Yes; there are many who have mortgages, but, on the other hand, there are a great many who have not.

3236. That is to say they are not being ruined by mortgaging?—No.

3237. The incumbrances are not heavy?—In some cases they are heavy. I have known two or three cases in my time where the land was purchased, say 20 years ago, or 18 years ago, when land was at a higher price than was ever known in my time or yours, where they have succumbed. They have borrowed all the purchase-money within a very small portion; and now they have more interest to pay in those cases than the other parties that were renting upon the adjoining land.

3238. I gather there are not many of those instances?—No, very few indeed; chiefly it has been improvident men that have come to grief in that way.

3239. In the cases in your district where men rent, and where men own, do you notice any difference in the cultivation; that is to say, do the owners seem to cultivate their land better, and get more off it, than the men who simply rent it?—No I do not think they do.

3240. If we had in the country a means whereby

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

whereby the local authority of the parish, or district, or county, could purchase land for the purpose of creating small holdings such as you refer to, and give a man that land on the payment of one-fourth of the money, say 25 *l.* out of every 100 *l.*, the other three-fourths to remain as a perpetual charge upon the land, upon which he would have to pay at the rate of 4 per cent., would not that man be practically in the position of an owner towards the land, and get as much out of it as a freeholder?—Yes, I believe he would; but at the same time I believe the bulk of the small farmers would rather be tenants than purchase under those conditions; of having to borrow three-parts of the money.

3241. That is to say they would rather be tenants paying a fair annual rental on a lease than be practically freeholders with power to devise, though not to subdivide, with three-fourths of the money still remaining as a charge upon the land?—I believe they would rather be tenants than be under those conditions; speaking for myself, I would.

3242. What would be your reason for saying that?—One reason, and I think a very strong one, was one brought out in the answer to a question put by Mr. Collings to the last witness: that if you were assisted in this way with three-fourths of the purchase money being charged upon the land, you would then be debarred from moving to any other place where you might see a better opportunity perhaps for your own energies; because instead of letting that land to some one else you could only sell it out and out, and have no possible chance of coming back to it; so that you would be tied to the place where you have sunk a little capital. That would be a very strong reason with me certainly.

3243. That is to say, practically, the man would not be any longer free?—Just so; especially with Mr. Collings' clause, which he was putting to the last witness. That is a clause that I would not be tied to, certainly.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

3244. How long has this system of small holdings prevailed in your district?—For generations.

3245. Can you tell us how it first began?—I cannot say; I have no idea.

3246. Do you know whether this land was ever held otherwise than in small holdings?—I believe not, for this simple reason, that if you take 100 acres, it would be cut in lots of half an acre, or an acre, and so on; and you cannot find one owner in twenty cases that owns two of these plots together.

3247. It is a sort of colony, is it not?—No, it is not a colony; but I can give you an instance of a colony in the parish, and that is a small common with about 25 acres upon it, which was cut up by the parish authorities about 35 years ago, and an acre given to any industrious labourer in the parish who would take to an acre and put a cottage upon it; upon those conditions he should have it for 1 *s.* a year to be paid to the authorities of the parish. Each of those 24 or 25 acres (whatever the quantity was) has still a cottage upon it, and the labourers are still cultivating their acres, and not one of them in the 35 years has ever been a burden to the parish to my knowledge.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

3248. You cannot tell us at all how this system began; but I understand you to say that it has existed beyond the memory of man?—Yes, beyond the memory of man.

3249. And these little properties have descended from father to son for all that time?—Yes.

3250. The land is very good, is it not?—Some is very good, and some inferior; some of it is strong clay; it varies very much indeed. I have some myself which is as rich land as could be cultivated and also some very tenacious clay, far from good. Had it been in larger plots so that it could have been inclosed much of it would have been turned to grass many years ago.

3251. If this strong land had been in larger plots it would have been laid down to grass years ago you say?—Yes. It is like this: suppose this piece of paper is one of the plots, one end of it, perhaps two-thirds, and at the other three-fourths would be rich land as you would wish to cultivate, and then the other end would be strong tenacious clay. Therefore, if it could be cut off, the strong land could have been laid down to grass, and the other portion could be still cultivated at a profit. Perhaps one-third, or in some cases not more than one-tenth of a plot of land is scarcely of any value for cultivation, whereas the other three-fourths or nine-tenths is very good.

3252. A lot of that land would pay better if it was laid down to grass?—Yes, especially the strong land.

3253. It is very well farmed you say?—Yes, the bulk of it.

3254. As a rule that would be characteristic of the district, would it not?—Yes; of course there are exceptions.

3255. Generally speaking the land is well farmed?—Yes.

3256. How many quarters of wheat would it grow to the acre?—It would grow on the average 30 bushels; and in some instances I have known (in fact I have done it myself) it has been up to 60 bushels an acre; but that is a very rare occurrence. I have often grown from 30 to 40 bushels an acre; and I have had as much as 60. It is sold in what we call loads, that is three bushels, and I have had as little as eight loads in a very dry hot season, and as much as 20 loads, which is 60 bushels, in a good season.

3257. You may count upon something like five quarters to the acre; that is something like 40 bushels, on the average?—No, 30 bushels.

3258. Throughout the district?—No, not so much throughout the district; but on our better land I should say that would be the average.

3259. You spoke of a farm of 500 acres in the neighbourhood which would support 50 families, if there had been buildings on it?—Yes.

3260. There is one farm, is there, of 500 acres altogether in your parish?—There was at one time, in the adjoining parish; but it has been sold in three or four different lots, one lot being 100 acres, and so on. The owner of a great portion of it died, and it was sold by the family of the man who owned the bulk of it before. It was left among the children, and it has been sold in small plots.

3261. Some of these occupiers you said had

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

begun as labourers, and had thrived so well that they had become farmers of 100 and 150 acres?—Yes.

3262. Where they hold 150 acres, do they do the land really well?—Yes; they still farm it, and they are farming well. It is the fact that they are farming well, and are industrious and steady men, that has caused them to increase their holdings. They have increased their holdings in some cases by absorbing other farms; and in other cases they have changed from small holdings to larger ones, as their capital has increased.

3263. Do the men on that land grow as much in proportion now that they have 150 acres as they did before?—As a rule; but farming land of 100 or 150 acres in one holding that varies in quality there is no possible mode of farming that would make it grow as much as the better land.

3264. Where the size of the farm has been increased up to 100 or 150 acres it is more moderate land; is that what you mean?—I do not say it has been increased. I say it is the men themselves who have moved from a small farm to another larger farm when a larger farm has fallen vacant.

3265. You mean they have changed from a smaller farm to a larger one?—Yes.

3266. The larger farms to which they have changed, I understand, are not such good land?—In several cases they are not; they vary.

3267. That is generally so, I suppose?—That is generally so.

3268. You said that most of the men who had very small farms had other means of existence?—Yes.

3269. They are employed as labourers?—Yes.

3270. Does that ever lead to any difficulties with the employers; I mean in this way: Are they able to get regular employment from the farmers, seeing that sometimes when the farmers want their services themselves they must be engaged in cultivating their own land?—No; I think I explained that a man and his family, with three or four acres of land, are capable of doing the hand work on the land at such time when they are not required on the farm.

3271. It does not interfere with their earning wages?—Not with a holding up to that size. If it comes to eight or ten acres, as a rule, they are not employed in other ways, but only upon their own land.

3272. You have given us a very interesting description of the advantage with which these small farms can be cultivated when the land is very good; what should you say about a system of small holdings if the land was very inferior?—When you say "very inferior," what kind of land do you mean?

3273. It has been proposed to us that the local authorities should be empowered to acquire all the waste lands of England; that is to say, land that had not been cultivated hitherto, and which presumably, therefore, is the worst land in the country?—I am acquainted with some waste land which, if cultivated, is really rich; and I am acquainted with waste land which is really uncultivatable at a profit.

3274. Are you acquainted with much waste land which could be cultivated at a profit?—No, because there is very little such waste land in our district. It was open common; and at the time of the Inclosure Act of perhaps 100 years ago, the bulk of it was inclosed.

3275. I do not understand you to recommend the adoption of a system of small holdings by reclaiming waste land which is bad land?—Certainly not.

3276. I think you wished to see a Bill upon this question made compulsory, that is to say, with power given to the local authority to take land by compulsion?—Yes.

3277. Would you approve of a Bill that proposed to take your own 10 acres by compulsion?—I do not suppose for a moment, and the honourable Member, I presume, does not suppose for a moment, that a Bill would ever be passed or even proposed, that would take the land of a man that only had 10 acres.

3278. I do not see any distinction between taking 100 acres and taking 10 acres?—Perhaps you do not, but I see a very wide distinction.

3279. How do you justify the distinction?—In this way. Where a parish is cut up as Epworth parish is cut up, into such small holdings which are of the very greatest benefit to the inhabitants and the town and district, and there is a large estate in the neighbourhood, which I do not think for a moment is so cut up as to be of the greatest benefit, it would clearly be beneficial to take a portion of the large estate rather than the small holdings.

3280. Do you say that a large estate is never worked to the best advantage?—Yes, for the population of the district at large.

3281. Let us pursue this question a little further. Where do you think the limit should be drawn; down to at what sized holding, in your opinion, should land be taken by compulsion?—I should not like to draw the limit. I believe whenever it comes before Parliament they will be much better able to draw the limit than I can.

3282. You have formed no opinion as to that?—I would not express one.

3283. Except that you would not like to have estates of 10 acres interfered with?—Certainly not.

3284. Would you have estates of 20 acres interfered with?—I would not, but when I find one man or two men, or 10 or 20 men, who are the occupiers of a whole parish, to the exclusion of all the labourers or small tradesmen in that parish, I say then I should be prepared to put a compulsory clause into operation if they would not grant facilities for getting land without it.

3285. Would you do so if 10 men divide the whole parish between them?—I say one man or 10 men.

3286. Do you speak of owners?—In some cases one man is the owner of the whole parish, but it would equally apply to the occupiers.

3287. You think that wherever one man owns the whole parish there ought to be compulsory clauses to take land?—Yes, I do; that is an extreme case, but I would not confine it to a parish where there is only one owner.

3288. Where do you draw the limit?—I would not draw the limit. I would leave it to the wisdom

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Mr. *Chaplin* – continued.

wisdom of Parliament to decide the question when it comes before them. I think they are much more able to deal with it than I am.

3289. You would not attempt to draw any limit?—I would not.

3290. Are you acquainted with any of these large estates you speak of, consisting entirely of good land such as would be desirable, according to your own description, for small holdings?—Yes; I am acquainted with one in the very next parish to where I live.

3291. What is the size of the estate?—Perhaps 3,000 acres.

3292. Is the whole of it good land?—The great portion of it is certainly.

3293. How is it cultivated now?—There is one farm of about 800 acres.

3294. That is very good land, is it?—Very good land, it has been warped, and the honourable Member knows as a practical man what that means.

3295. That is to say that a great deal of money has been laid out in making it good land?—Yes, it was worthless before.

3296. Is it well provided with the necessary buildings?—It is provided with the necessary buildings for farming it as a large farm.

3297. If you were to take this large farm of 800 acres, which you say is very good land and divide it into small holdings, you would have to create buildings all over it I presume?—No, I do not think so, because the village that is near this particular farm is sufficiently near for a man to have 10 acres and to farm it, and live in a cottage in the village where he does now.

3298. There would be no necessity for new buildings at all, do you mean?—In some cases; but there is something more than a cottage now; even a labourer has a pig stye. He would require a cow shed; but that is about all.

3299. And a stable, I suppose?—A stable in some cases, not necessarily in all cases; as I said before, several men who are farming about 10 acres of land keep a horse, and many of them join together and do the horse work for four or five of those holders of one to five acres.

3300. How much of this 800 acres would you propose to take to divide up into small holdings by a compulsory Bill?—That is going into details which I would prefer not to do. It would depend upon the people's requirements. I do not know the requirements well enough to say.

3301. I ask the question because you as a witness have advocated the principle of taking land by compulsion, and I thought you would have considered all the difficulty in detail that might arise; but I understand that those are subjects you do not wish to give an opinion on?—That is so; I have given a case in my parish where the system is working thoroughly well; and I have thought it was within the wisdom of Parliament to devise a scheme that would work equally well in other places.

3302. I understand you to say that while you think it has answered admirably in your district, and while you advocate it very strongly where the land is good, you would not attempt to adopt the system in the case of waste land that is very inferior?—Or any other inferior land, not only waste.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3303. You told us that the lowest price of the land was 40 *l.* an acre; do you know the average?—No, I could not say at the moment; I bought some as high as 85 *l.*

3304. Is its present value as high as it cost you?—No, it is not; the bulk of it was bought at a time when agricultural produce was selling at a greater price.

3305. Can you tell me now what the average value would be?—It has receded about one-fourth.

3306. Is it worth 60 *l.* an acre now?—Yes.

3307. What would be the present value if it were rented?—From 2 *l.* 5 *s.* to 3 *l.*, on this particular kind.

3308. Is there any house upon the land?—No.

3309. That is the net value of the land?—Yes.

3310. After paying tithes, rates, and taxes?—It is the net value of the land, and the tenant will have the tithes, rates, and taxes to pay, beyond that.

3311. Have you any idea what is the value of the produce per acre of your land?—It varies considerably, according to the kind of produce that is upon it. On the average I would say 10 *l.* or 12 *l.*; perhaps 12 *l.*

3312. What is the cost of cultivation?—The cost of horse work that is hired upon the land would be about 30 *s.* an acre, taking one year with another; some crops would be not nearly so much, and some more.

3313. The net profit altogether of 10 acres would be, how much per acre?—I should put it at 5 *l.* an acre.

3314. You think that the holder can earn about 50 *l.* a year, or 1 *l.* a week, on a 10-acre plot?—Yes, he and his family.

3315. Would he require more than one boy to do that?—No; I have a very near neighbour indeed who is farming 10 to 12 acres with one boy, 12 or 14 years old. His land is not strong tenacious land, but land that he can cultivate with one horse, and he does a little with his horse for other people. He lives thoroughly comfortable, and is improving his holding as he goes on.

3216. What are the labourers' wages at present?—2 *s.* 3 *d.* a day; 13 *s.* 6 *d.* a week on the average.

3317. Are they guaranteed constant employment?—No; but in summer-time, from now up to next October, they would make more than that.

3318. Do you mean that on an average they get 13 *s.* 6 *d.*?—No; on an average they would be getting something like 15 *s.*, taking the harvest in.

3319. You consider that a man with 10 acres to cultivate would get about 1 *l.* a week, and as an agricultural labourer he would get about 15 *s.* a week?—Yes.

3320. In speaking of the man having 10 acres do you include the entire produce of the land without making any abatement for what he and his family consume?—No; I consider what he consumes as part of his gain most decidedly.

3321. With regard to this 500-acre farm, which you say would keep 50 families, how many people would

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

would be employed upon it when it was occupied as one farm?—I think I said that there would be four or five single men employed upon the farm; that, is farm servants boarded in the house, and about half-a-dozen day labourers that would be married and lived away; some in cottages on the farm and others about two miles away, who would have to walk there and back.

3322. Mr. Chaplain asked you with regard to land of different qualities; do you find that bad land and good land are equally better cultivated in small holdings?—I do.

3323. And although very inferior land might not be worth cultivating, yet do you think that it would be better for the labourer to cultivate poor land than not to have land at all?—There are lands which he would be better without altogether.

3324. There is a limit, you think?—There is land that would not be cultivated at a profit by a large farmer that would be cultivated at a profit by a labourer.

Sir *George Campbell.*

3325. I think it is from Lincolnshire that you come; is that not a county in which small properties are very largely distributed, and are very numerous?—In that part of Lincolnshire it is so; in the Isle of Axholme.

3326. Are there many other parishes where small holdings prevail as they do in your parish?—No; in the two adjoining parishes they do; but scarcely to the same extent.

3327. It is the Isle of Axholme that you are referring to?—Yes.

3328. Where small properties prevail, are they mostly in the shape you have described, of very small contiguous plots, or is the land divided into small farms?—The hundreds of acres that I have shown here would have a plough division only between them; and there are hundreds of acres in the same parish that are still in small inclosures amongst small holders.

3329. Is this system of very small holdings divided only by plough common in Lincolnshire?—No; it is only in three or four parishes to any extent.

3330. Is the system of very small farms common in Lincolnshire?—I believe not; it is not so far as my experience and knowledge goes.

3331. I thought you said that it was in the Isle of Axholme?—Yes; but that is only a very small portion of Lincolnshire.

3332. In the Isle of Axholme the system is common?—Yes, very.

3333. You say it is mostly in the shape of small farms; what size would those small farms be?—I gave the figures, ranging from two roods up to 200 acres.

3334. Outside of those very small holdings what is the ordinary size of the small farms in the Isle of Axholme?—The statistics I have given will answer the question I think. I will hand them to you (*handing a Paper to the honourable Member.*)

3335. These are the holdings in your particular parish?—Yes.

3336. I want to go beyond the parish. What is the general system in this part of Lincolnshire; what is the ordinary style of small farmer that is common there?—Through the Isle of Axholme there is a range of small farms from four acres up to 20 acres; and then if they get up to 40 acres or from that to 50 I should call them medium farms, so far as our district is concerned.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

3337. Are the great majority of the farms from two to 20 acres held by people who live by the land, or people who have other occupations?—As a rule they have other employments in the smaller holdings.

3338. Those holding from 10 to 20 acres have generally no other occupation?—No; they find sufficient employment on their own land.

3339. What proportion, should you think, of those small farms are cultivated by the owners; let us take first those specially small farm holdings of from two roods to two acres?—I should think at least half of those are owners.

3340 As regards those other farms of from 10 to 50 acres, by whom are they cultivated?—I should say the bulk of them are tenants. I find that when a man gets a little capital, if he has only a few acres, and is able to extend his holding, he would rather extend his holding as a tenant than expend the money in purchasing the land as a rule, in our district.

3341. Are the bulk of these small holders tenants under large landowners?—No; we have not any large landowners in the parish.

3342. The bulk of the holdings of from 10 to 50 acres are owned by small owners, are they?—Of those holding from 10 to 20 acres, there is a fair proportion who are owners, but above that the bulk of them are tenants.

3343. But I mean, apart from the question of the occupiers being tenants or owners, are the owners generally small owners?—Yes, in our parish we have not what you would term a large landowner.

3344. How large are they?—I should say 100 acres, or 150 at the most; and not more than one or two of them.

3345. I understand that in this part of Lincolnshire the small properties have come down from ancient times?—Yes.

3346. What is the nature of the cultivation; is it arable rather than grass?—Yes; and one of the staple products of our district is potatoes.

3347. And that potato cultivation is very favourable to small holdings, is it not?—Yes. Within the last few years the cultivation of celery has been very much extended, at a very great profit and increase of labour.

3348. Is it your experience that in the course of the last few years, that the small holders have been holding their own, or has the the tendency been for the land to fall into the hands of tenants?—I think that the small owners have not only held their own as owners as a rule, but I have known in many cases where they have sold their small ownerships to become tenants of a larger holding, were they could extend their holding and employ their families to a greater advantage than they could on the small portion of land they were owning, and employing the surplus labour for other people. They would rather sell out their freehold and rent a farm of say 20 or 50 acres.

3349. In the case of these small farms of from 10 to 50 acres, is a house built generally upon the land?—

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

land?—No; the town of Epworth itself runs for two miles right through the heart of the parish, and as a rule, the land that is farmed lies contiguous to these houses, and apart, and can be worked from the village itself; and the farmsteads vary in size; but when you get a mile or two out then the holdings become larger.

3350. But in your case you say most of these farms are let, and not cultivated by the man who owns the house in which the farmer lives?—In very many cases not the same party owns the land that is farming it. In many cases the house that is occupied either belongs to the man who farms the land or to some other party, apart from the man or woman owning the land. In some cases the landlord is practically the same both as to the house and to the land, but in many cases he is not.

3351. In many cases a man takes a house in the village, and then farms the land from that house?—Yes; that is so.

3352. Has any great difficulty arisen with regard to this question of buildings on small holdings?—No, not in our parish; because, as I have shown, the street of the town itself runs for two miles, and there are the best facilities for buying or renting land near to the houses.

3353. You can get houses within reach generally?—Yes.

3354. As regards the transfer of these small holdings, is that an expensive matter?—Yes, it is rather expensive; but in my own case I invariably arranged with the solicitor that the purchase-money should include the cost of transfer. I should arrange conditionally for the price of the land, and then I will take it under the conditions that they will transfer it for so much more. As a rule that is the system that is carried out in bargaining for it. Of course, if it is put up to auction you have to submit to their conditions; but I am speaking of private bargains.

3355. You say that in this parish most of the farmers from 10 to 50 acres are tenants rather than owners; in the Isle of Axholme are there not a very large number of cultivating farmers who own the land?—There are not a very great many cultivating farmers of above 10 acres as owners. When they get in a position to farm more than 10 acres I find, as a rule, they would sell out rather than burden themselves by purchasing more, and take a larger farm, so as to employ the whole of the family.

3355* Then the popular belief that the Isle of Axholme is a paradise for small owners is not quite well founded; though there are a great number of small owners on it?—There is no question about that. I do not wish to convey the impression that small owners are diminishing by any means; because if one small owner sells out he is reproduced by another, and not by a large owner; it is another small owner who buys him out. It has been so in my case each time.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

3356. You said that when they get a farm of over 10 acres they generally prefer to become tenants under a lease; do you not think that the fear of the lawyer's bill has something to do with that?—Yes, I have no doubt it has; but there

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

is another thing which has a very great influence. If they hire or rent land, they can get hold of a greater bulk, which will employ the growing-up sons and growing-up family, and they can do that with greater advantage than having them confined on a small lot of their own, or turning them adrift into the world where they do not know what will become of them.

3357. Do they take a lease, or is their tenancy yearly?—On small farms many of them are yearly; but still there is a security of this kind; in our particular district there is a local custom that secures them thoroughly for all improvements in the land in every way.

3358. There is a local tenant-right, in fact?—Yes; doubtless honourable Members know the system.

3359. Would you inform the Committee of the nature of the local tenant-right?—I will so far as I am able. I will take a field of potatoes, for instance. Suppose that it has been well ploughed and well tilled, and thoroughly cleaned from all twitch (that is couch grass and all rubbish), and it has been well manured and thoroughly well done on each acre; if that had to be given up in the autumn, after the potatoes were reaped from that land the tenant-right would range from 6 *l.* to 10 *l.* on such land. And another year supposing it had grown wheat or barley after these potatoes, it would be considerably reduced perhaps 3 *l.* or 4 *l.* as tenant-right.

3360. That is much the same principle as that of the present Agricultural Holdings Act, is it not?—Yes, to a very great extent.

3361. In regard to buildings, is there any tenant-right; does a man get any compensation if he puts up a building?—I do not know a single instance in our district where a tenant has put up a building upon a holding that was not his own property. It has been done by the owners of property wherever I have known it.

3362. Supposing that there was an easy and cheap system of sale and transfer of land, do you not think that the larger farmers would prefer adding to their freeholds instead of becoming tenants?—It would have a tendency that way, I have not the least doubt. If a man could buy a hundred pounds' worth of land at as little expense, with only a penny receipt stamp to pay for, as he could in buying a horse, it would facilitate the transfer of land no doubt.

3363. In this district of small holdings is there much pauperism?—No, there is not.

3364. Can you give us any details upon that subject?—I have a list here of ten labourers whom I went amongst the other night. I should say, as a rule, five or six at least of those ten in the winter would formerly have been a burden upon the parish; and since they got the allotments here, where they can grow barley, wheat, and potatoes, not a single man of them has been on the parish; and I am in a position to know about that, for I am the collector of rates, and I have no difficulty whatever in getting the rates for this land from these people.

3365. In your opinion a system of small holdings would tend to decrease the poor rates?—Very much indeed; I am thoroughly convinced of that.

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Mr. GEORGE WIMPENNY, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3366. WHERE do you live?—At Delamere, in Cheshire.

3367. What are you?—A farm labourer.

3368. Have you a small holding?—Yes.

3369. Of what extent?—Seven acres.

3370. Is it grass land?—Yes.

3371. What do you keep upon it?—Four cows.

3372. How long have you had it?—Over 18 years, but not all of it all the time; I commenced with four acres.

3373. What stock did you put upon it?—I had only one cow when I came, but I soon got three.

3374. How did you get the three?—I worked on an adjoining farm, and my wife almost got a living on the small farm, and I saved money and purchased two cows.

3375. So that you got it all out of your savings?—Yes.

3376. Now you have seven acres and four cows?—Yes.

3377. What rent do you pay?—I have paid 32 *l.*, but I do not pay so much now.

3378. How much do you pay now?—It would run to about 25 *l.*

3379. How much are the farmers paying in the neighbourhood?—The large farmers pay about 2 *l.* an acre.

3380. Is your land any better than theirs?—It is only better by being better stocked and a little richer. Some of the large farms are as good as mine.

3381. Is it better situated?—It is very well situated.

3382. But not better situated than the large farms?—No.

3383. Have you done well with this holding?—Yes, I have done much better than being a farmer's labourer.

3384. You have been able to save money with it?—Yes, I have saved some; and this land which I have added to it is in my own name, though I have not paid for it all yet.

3385. You have become owner of part of it?—Yes, one field.

3386. What did you pay for that?—It is a little over 2¼ acres, and I paid 440 *l.*

3387. Were you able to pay that without borrowing upon it?—No.

3388. Are you paying off the loan upon the property?—Yes.

3389. You hope to become absolute owner?—Yes. Perhaps I may explain as to the price I paid; that land is a splendid site for building; and a builder, a neighbour of mine, ran me up past the value; that raised the value.

3390. Did you buy it for building land?—No.

3391. You have not built upon it?—No.

3392. Are you using it as pasture land?—Yes.

3393. In your neighbourhood are there many of these small holders?—Yes.

3394. Do they get on on the whole?—Yes, as a whole they do.

3395. The majority of them get on?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

3396. There are plenty of applicants for land, I suppose?—Too many, that is what cripples us.

3397. Competition runs up the price?—Yes.

3398. Is there any difficulty in getting land?—Yes.

3399. Do the large owners refuse to let land or sell land?—I have never heard of anybody trying to press them in that way. They are very good landlords with us in Cheshire, and very great farmers; and they seem to be all satisfied.

3400. You do not think that there is any particular demand for these small holdings in your district which is not satisfied?—Yes, there is a demand for them, because there are more applicants for a little farm than there are for a big one.

3401. Do you consider that any additional facilities ought to be given to get small holdings?—No, I cannot see my way to having them compulsorily. I do not believe in loans; and I do not believe in introducing the local authorities and the ratepayers.

3402. Just tell us about that; why do you say not believe in introducing local authorities?—Why should they trust the money to a poor man who cannot take care of his own?

3403. You think it would not be a safe speculation to lend money to men who had not been able to save any?—Not at all.

3404. As a ratepayer you would not like to invest in such a speculation?—No.

3405. You think the people to be helped are the people who help themselves?—Yes.

3406. In a case where a man has shown himself able to help himself, would you object to any facilities being given?—I would not approve of anything forcible, but I should like him to have the chance to rise, so that the best men with good characters who are able to work a farm, and have saved a little money might take a larger farm; but they must have bondsmen; I would not run a risk in any way.

3407. You are satisfied to leave it to arrangements which the people can make amongst themselves without interfering by law?—Yes.

3408. Your evidence then is in favour of small holdings?—Yes.

3409. But you do not think that legislation is necessary to create additional ones?—I cannot see my way through it. We can give you our best advice as to how we can get on, and if you could help us in any way voluntarily so much the better; but I cannot see my way through anything compulsory.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

3410. Just tell me about this 2¼ acres; I understand you gave 440 *l.* for it?—Yes.

3411. Yes; and it was a splendid building site, and that that was what gave it its exceptional value?—Yes.

3412. Have you built upon it?—No, my house was close to it; it adjoins my garden, my other land.

3413. But

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

3413. But it will be probably built upon in the course of time, I suppose?—No, not so long as I am master of it.

3414. Can you make it pay at that price?—No, I lost by it.

3415. But still it is an advantage to have the land adjoining your other land?—Yes; I had better lose 100 *l.* in money than lose the field.

3416. At the same time it will also possess an exceptional value as building land if you want to part with it?—Yes it will.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

3417. I think you know of several other small holders besides yourself in that district?—Yes, many.

3418. How many are there?—To speak at a guess, I should say there are 40.

3419. What is the size of their holdings?—They run from three to 30 acres.

3420. Are they held under several landlords, or one?—Several landlords.

3421. Who are the chief landlords there?—I do not think there is any exceptional one, they are cut up in a great many.

3422. They are not Crown lands?—No.

3423. You have a brother, I think, who has a small holding?—Yes.

3424. How many acres has he got?—Six acres.

3425. What does he pay for that?—£. 30 a year.

3426. Is the average rent for a small holding about 5 *l.* a year?—Yes, where the farm is rich.

3427. And would the rent of large farms be about 2 *l.*?———

3428. In some parts is the rent of these small holdings as much as 7 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

3429. Can they make a living out of it, at that rent, or is it too high?—They cannot live upon it.

3430. If you have to pay 5 *l.* an acre for this land for which the large farmer pays about 2 *l.*, how do you make a profit out of it as compared with him?—I cannot, to compare with the farmer, but still I can do better than being a farm labourer; I keep cows, and I keep them well, and I breed pigs and fat pigs; and make more than I could as a farm labourer.

3431. Do you sell your milk and make butter?—I sell butter.

3432. Where do you sell it?—At Northwich; my wife takes it in.

3433. How far is that from you?—Eight to nine miles.

3434. Do you put more labour into the land than the farmer does?—Not much; there are some splendid farmers round us, and some of them get as large crops as I do off some parts of the land, but they cannot keep it all so rich, because they have more land, and perhaps they have not so much capital in proportion as I have.

3435. Do you work harder than an agricultural labourer does?—No, not so hard.

3436. And do you not have so long hours or such hardships to go through as the agricultural labourers?—No.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

3437. You say that one reason for the increased rent for small holdings in your district, as compared with large holdings, is the competition for small holdings; there are so many wanting them?—Yes.

3438. There are people wanting them who cannot get them?—Yes.

3439. There are not enough small farms at present to satisfy the demand?—No.

3440. Do you not think something might be done to increase the number of small farms?—I cannot see my way compulsorily; if a man would do it voluntarily, for the good of the population, it would be a very good thing.

3441. The very fact that you have to pay more than double the rent for small holdings that is paid for large farms shows that they will not do it voluntarily, does it not?—Yes.

3442. The demand now exceeds the supply a good deal, does it not?—Yes.

3443. Supposing you had the local authority or your county council, or district council buying land, if the landowners would be willing to sell it in large quantities of 400 or 500 acres, and dividing it up into small farms of 10 to 30 acres, would that be an advantage?—Yes, I believe it would be better than it is now; still I cannot see my way very clearly without getting into a difficulty.

3444. For instance, if they could buy the 500 acres farm at an estimated rental of 2 *l.* an acre, and there is sufficient demand for small holdings for them to get 3 *l.* an acre, it would not be a bad business bargain for the local authority, would it?—No; it might act; I cannot see my way clear; I do not say against it.

3445. Supposing that you could see by figures that the local authority was held safe from any loss, so that the ratepayers would not have to pay for it. You would not be against it?—No.

3446. Now as to the character of your land; what kind of land is it?—Grazing land, pasture land.

3447. Is there any fruit growing?—Yes.

3448. Does that pay?—Yes, some of it. Damson fruit pays; but apples do not pay so much since the foreign fruit trade came in.

3449. In addition to the rent you have the tithes and poor rates, I presume?—The tithes are very heavy; I have only one part where there are tithes. In Delamere now we are free from tithes.

3450. In the other part the tithes are heavy?—Yes.

3451. That makes it more difficult for you to get a good living out of it?—Yes.

3452. What do the tithes come to?—Half-a-crown an acre. I have only tithes on one part; most of the neighbours round have two tithes.

3453. Are there many paupers in your district?—No, not where there are small holdings.

3454. Do you agree with the last witness, that small holdings would do away to a large extent with pauperism?—Yes, I am sure of it.

3455. And you would have a much larger number of people living upon the land, with such a system, than with a system of large farms?—Yes.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3456. Following up the question that was asked you just now, you seem afraid of the ratepayers risking their money in letting small holdings, is that so?—I would not go to any risk if I saw a risk in it.

3457. Would it not be better to incur a little risk in letting land than to incur the actual cost in keeping the poor in the workhouse; you know of course that the poor are maintained out of the rates?—Yes.

3458. I understand you to say that you believe that if there were small holdings to a large extent the poor would not go to the workhouse to the same extent that they do now?—Quite so.

3459. Would not it be better that the rates should be used to get men on to land where they can work than in keeping them in the workhouse doing nothing?—I do not say against it; but I cannot see my way clear to doing anything compulsory, because sometimes it leaves us enemies in our neighbourhood.

3460. Supposing it could be done without risk to the rates you would not object to it?—No.

3461. The farmers pay 2 *l.* an acre, you say?—On the large farms.

3462. At 28 years' purchase that would be 56 *l.* The labourers you say are willing to pay 5 *l.* an acre?—Yes, for good land, with good buildings and well fenced.

3463. For the very same land that farmers are paying 2 *l.* for the men are willing to pay 5 *l.*?—Yes, but there would be more buildings, and more fences, and more roads for the small farms.

3464. Are you able to tell us what the value of the buildings upon a small holding of 10 acres would be?—About 10 *l.* a year.

3465. That is 1 *l.* an acre on a 10-acre plot?—Yes.

3466. You would be willing to pay 5 *l.* an acre, or 4 *l* an acre without the buildings?—Yes.

3467. Where the farmer pays 2 *l.*?—Yes.

3468. So that there will be a clear profit of 2 *l.* an acre for the local authority?—Where there are small farms there will always be extra expenses. £. 1 extra would cover the buildings.

3469. Would that include the fences?—No, I do not know what the fences would be.

3470. What are the farm wages in that district?—Two shillings and sixpence a day.

3471. What would be the income from a 10-acre holding?—More than a hundred a year.

3472. More than 10 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

3473. Can you tell me what the cost of working would be upon 10-acre plots?—Call it 50 *l.*

3474. You think there would be 1 *l.* a week net profit?—Yes.

3475. A man would be 5 *s.* a week better off as the occupier of a holding of 10 acres than he would be as an agricultural labourer, where he could only earn 15 *s.* a week?—Yes, but he must have his capital in the holding.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

3476. As against that 5 *s.*, he would lose the interest upon his capital?—Yes, I have 100 *l.* of capital on my little place.

3477. There is also the risk of loss of stock, and so forth?—Yes.

Mr. *Compton Lawrence*—continued.

3478. And of course there is a certain amount of risk?—Yes; but to cover that he has the chance of increasing, which he would not have otherwise.

3479. When you speak of land letting at 4 *l.* an acre, you mean good grass land of course?—Yes.

3480. It is very difficult to get a large farm worth so much as that with good land all through, I presume. I do not know how the farms run in your district; what is the size of the largest?—Six-hundred acres; or rather there is one on Crown land of 900 acres.

3481. It is very difficult, is it not, to get 900 acres of good grass land, good all through?—It would not be all good; but there is some very good.

3482. It would vary I suppose, and the larger the farms the more it would vary?—Yes.

3483. Have you got some good buildings upon your property?—I put them up myself. In the case of the first building I put up the property was sold, and away went my building.

3484. You did not buy that?—No; but my sister-in-law bought it, and I stopped at the place.

3485. You rented in that case?—Yes.

Sir *George Campbell.*

3486. I understand you began as an agricultural labourer, is that so?—Yes.

3487. Under the voluntary system you have raised yourself to be a small proprietor?—Yes. My wife lived where I now live; and she had one cow, I had 5 *s.* of my own, that was my start.

3488. You have made all the money yourself?—Except the one cow.

3489. Do you think that an agricultural labourer could save so much as to be able to give 440 *l.* for land; are you not rather an exception?—I may be rather an exception; but there are some who have done as well as I have.

3490. There are not many, are there?—No; but a neighbour of mine (Mr Frith) has done better. He farms 600 acres of Crown land, and he commenced with a small holding.

3491. Did he commence as an agricultural labourer?—I cannot say.

3492. Did he marry a wife with land, or have any money left him?—He did not tell me anything of that kind; he told me that he fought his way up and worked hard, as I did.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

3493. Did you say that you had saved money as an agricultural labourer?—Not as a labourer, but since I settled on a small holding.

3494. Had you any money given you when you started?—No.

3495. You have got on by yourself?—Yes.

3496. Are there many labourers who could save a little, so as to get on in the same manner if they got the chance?—They cannot save money as farm labourers after they get married and have a family; but a good steady farm servant with 20 *l.* a year might save 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* in a few years to commence with and take a small farm, might he not.

3497. If there was a prospect of a labourer being

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

being able to get on if he could save from 20 *l.* to 60 *l.* or 70 *l.*, do you think he would be able to do it; if facilities were given to him to acquire land, when he could save the money, do you think that he would set to work and try to save it?—Yes; but I cannot see my way clear to trust him with my money before he saves money. He must save it first, and spend his money.

3498. Do you think that these men would be able to save if they were to try?—No; the only way to help them is by making the number of labourers thinner. Making more farmers of those who cannot save would raise their wages. That is the only way to help them.

3499. Some of them can save money, you say?—Yes; a general steady farm-servant can earn 20 *l.* a year and all his maintenance.

3500. A young man in service in the country can save 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* in a few years, you think?—Yes.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

3501. You say that a careful man will save a little money. Supposing he would like them to buy a small holding, do not you think it would be very desirable if he could get a loan from the public authority or from the Government at a low rate of interest. In your own case, I understand you purchased your 2½ acres of land and you paid 440 *l.* for it, and you borrowed some money to do it, did you not?—Yes, I borrowed from my brother; there was no local authority or ratepayers to purchase it.

3502. I will not ask you upon what terms you were able to borrow the money; but supposing you had been able to go to a local authority or to the Government who would lend you money at a reasonable rate of interest, would not that have been a great advantage to you?—Yes; but what if I failed and could not make progress?

3503. But you have not done so?—No; but I might have done.

3504. Whoever lent the money would have good security, would they not; in the same way as your brother has his security?—Yes; if they can get a security it is right; but I do not see how you can make it right when a man has not much to start with.

3505. Supposing that a man was going to give 100 *l.* for a field and had 25 *l.* to pay down there would be security for 75 *l.* in the land?—Yes.

3506. Supposing that he could borrow the 75 *l.* at 3 per cent. that would be an advantage, would it not?—Yes.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

3507. Do you think that there are too many labourers competing in your district for any individual labourer to get enough wages to enable him to save?—There are too many competing for small holdings.

3508. I mean competing for labourer's wages?—No; there is no grumbling as regards that; they are doing very well.

3509. What is the average wage of an unmarried labourer living on the farm?—Twenty pounds a year, and all his maintenance.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

3510. Do any unmarried labourers actually live upon the farm, and sleep on the homestead upon the farm?—Yes.

3511. Do you say that there are not enough small holdings in your opinion for the labourers who are able to save money, after they have worked on large farms for some years?—There are not enough.

3512. With regard to those two large farms you spoke of which belong to the Crown, one of which you said was 900, and one, the other, 600 acres, are those on the Delamere Forest?—Yes.

3513. When were they made into farms?—One has been a farm, perhaps, for hundreds of years; it never had trees on it at all, and the other has been a farm only about 18 or 20 years.

3514. Have the farmers prospered there?—Two have not, but one has.

3515. Do you think it would be well, if possible, that those large farms belonging to the Crown should be turned into small farms; do you think it would be an advantage both to the land and to the labourers in the district?—It would be an advantage if you could make them up in holdings of 10 to 100 acres and have more families kept on them.

3516. As it is now, the Crown builds a number of labourers' cottages close together, and gives them a little ground, does it not?—Yes.

3517. You believe on the forest it would be much better that there should be some facilities for these labourers to obtain small holdings in that district?—Yes, it would be much better for them.

3518. As it is now, there is no chance of getting a small holding for a labourer who is in the forest?—No.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

3519. Did I understand you to express some doubt as to the local authority being able to test a man's character as well as a private individual?—I expressed a doubt as regards the security on the man's part lest he should fail and not be able to come up to his appointments.

3520. Do you think that the local authority could not inquire into his character and take security from him, just the same as a private landlord could?—They could just the same.

3521. If that difficulty was overcome, you would not have the same objection, would you?—No, it is only the difficulties in the way.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3522. Do I understand that you built a house upon land that was not your own?—It was a kitchen to the house.

3523. Was it taken from you?—Yes.

3524. How much money did you spend upon it?—£. 30.

3525. Do you think that was right?—It was right as regards law. I knew what I was doing; I had to take the risk; I put it up for my own good.

3526. Do you think the law might be improved, so that you would get some of the money back?—I did get 10 *l.* back.

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Mr. WILLIAM GIBBONS, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3527. WHERE do you live?—At Wellingborough.

3528. What are you?—A machine upper-closer by trade.

3529. You are connected with the boot and shoe trade?—Yes.

3530. Have you a holding besides?—Yes, I have three acres.

3531. On an allotment farm?—Yes.

3532. I think you are connected with the Permanent Allotment Association of Wellingborough?—I am secretary of the association.

3533. How long have you been connected with it?—Ever since its commencement I have been secretary.

3534. What has been the work of this association?—I can tell you how it originated if you would like to hear.

3535. What has the association done in connection with allotments?—We have taken a farm.

3536. Did you buy it?—No, we have taken it over from Mr. Curry, a gentleman of London.

3537. You leased it?—Yes.

3538. What is the extent of it?—One hundred and eighty-three acres.

3539. What is the rent?—The rent is 320 *l.* 5 *s.* a year.

3540. When you got it what did you do with it?—We let it out in different portions.

3541. You broke it up into small allotments?—Yes.

3542. And divided it among your members?—Yes; in plots from as low as 10 poles to seven or eight acres; I think the largest holder holds about eight acres.

3543. How many holders are there all together?—There are 261 members; so that there will be as nearly as I can give you an estimate, about 200 holders.

3544. In what condition was the land when you took it?—Very bad indeed.

3545. How has it been cultivated since; is it in good condition as regards cultivation?—We consider that the farm is worth 1,000 *l.*, or nearly so, more to-day than it was when we took it.

3546. Is the production of the farm large?—Very good indeed. Five years ago we acquired a farm of 183 acres which was in a bad condition. In some of the fields, the previous tenant could only raise nine bushels of corn to the acre, as the land was full of twitch and wild oats. Last year the same field produced 5½ quarters, and in one instance six quarters to the acre; and the other fields averaged five quarters.

3547. Has the association applied for any more land besides that?—Yes.

3548. Have you taken any further land?—We have not taken any, but we have been the cause of somebody else taking it.

3549. For the purpose of small holdings?—Yes; for small holdings and allotments.

3550. Are there a great number of these small holdings and allotments all round you?—There are about 500 acres round Wellingborough, and we could do with 5,000 more.

Chairman—continued.

3551. What in your opinion is the effect upon the population?—Undoubtedly it is a great blessing.

3552. Do the majority of the tenants do well?—Yes, they do well.

3553. They all of them have some other occupation, I think?—With the exception of one or two they have.

3554. Most of them are people employed in trades in Wellingborough, I presume, who use their spare time upon these small holdings?—Yes; we have all sorts of trades represented: artizans, labourers, carriers, and so on.

3555. You believe that it would be a great advantage to extend the system of small holdings?—Undoubtedly it would.

3556. As regards the extent of the holdings, I suppose you would wish them to be of different sizes?—Yes, I should.

3557. How high would you go?—I think you might go from perhaps 10 or 15 to 40 acres.

3558. What amount of land do you think is necessary in order to provide a subsistence for a family without anything else to depend upon?—My idea is that if a man had 20 acres of land it would produce the following quantities: he should have 10 acres of wheat, which should produce five quarters to the acre, with good cultivation (we have done that easily, and we do it now); that would produce 16 tons of straw.

3559. At what value do you put the corn?—The value of the corn would be 1 *l.* 10 *s.* per quarter; that would be the selling price.

3560. What is the total amount for the corn, then?—£. 75.

3561. And then also, 16 tons of straw; how much do you put that at?—I put it at 2 *l.* 10 *s.* a ton (that is under the mark, but I would sooner be under than over). That would be 40 *l.* Then he should have four acres of roots at 10 *l.* an acre. I am taking the average of the country, but we produce considerably more than that on our farm; you might make another 3 *l.* an acre upon that; but we will say 10 *l.* an acre. That would produce another 40 *l.* Then if the holder has six acres of grass, that should produce nine tons of hay at 4 *l.* a ton, which would make 36 *l.*; and that would make the total for the 20 acres 191 *l.*

3562. You reckon 191 *l.* as the produce of the land?—Yes, for 20 acres.

3563. What would be the out-goings; what would the rent be?—The rent for the house, the building, I put at 40 *l.* a year.

3564. What else would there be?—Then during that year he would have to employ hired labour at least for two months in the year at different seasons; that would cost him 6 *l.* for two months at 15 *s.* a week, which is quite low enough for anybody to work for. Then his manure I put down at 20 *l.*; that is 1 *l.* an acre. That would manure the farm well when he gets it into anything like order. Then his seed I put down at 9 *l.* Then, hire of horses (he would have to hire at different times if he has not got horses of his

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Chairman—continued.

his own) and wear and tear of implements, 20 *l.*, making the total 95 *l.*; that leaves him to the good, with his house-rent free, 96 *l.* per year.

3565. In this calculation you have assumed that all the straw is sold?—Yes, all of it is sold.

3566. Do you think if you sell off the whole of the straw you could do with only 20 *l.* worth of manure?—Yes, I think you can; but it would be much better for the man to utilise the produce, if he could; that is, if he could get the stock to do it. With the addition of five acres more grass, and having stock to utilise his produce, I believe he would very nearly double his total receipts.

3567. Your opinion is that with 25 acres of land at a fair rent, a man can make a fair income?—A very good income indeed.

3568. You would desire therefore that additional facilities should be given for the creation of these small holdings?—I should.

3569. Do you think that the facilities should be for the creation of freeholds or tenancies?—I think leaseholds would be quite as well as freeholds.

3570. Do you think that people do not care about becoming owners?—I think if you get your fixity of tenure all right, leaseholds will be almost as well for labourers as ownership.

3571. Why do they not prefer ownership?—I do not know whether they would prefer it. I am giving you my opinion.

3572. Your opinion is that if they were provided with leases it would be satisfactory?—Yes, with fixity of tenure. When a man gets his holding into good order, I do not think that he should be disturbed under any circumstances, if it is possible to avoid it.

3573. Then you would make him a tenant subject to a quit rent?—Yes.

3574. With a provision that so long as he paid his quit rent, he was not to be turned out; is that your idea?—Yes, that is my idea.

3575. Have you seen Mr. Collings' Bill?—Yes, I have.

3576. That would be very much the system that you suggest, would it not?—Yes.

3577. That Bill, as you are aware, proposes to leave three-fourths of the purchase-money outstanding upon which a perpetual quit rent or perpetual interest is to be paid; would that meet your view of what is desirable?—Yes, it would in that respect.

3578. Do you think that it is necessary that such a Bill should be compulsory in its operation?—Yes, I think it would not be operative without.

3579. Do you think that there is no land that could be voluntarily purchased?—There are a deal of obstacles thrown in the way of the purchase of land, if you do not have compulsory clauses.

3580. Supposing the local authority had power to purchase land and would pay a fair price, do you think there would be any difficulty in getting land?—Yes; there would be difficulties in the way of the local authority, because there are a good many parties adverse to allotments.

3581. We are speaking of small holdings; would you apply that to small holdings?—Yes; there are a great many who are adverse. I do not know why they are adverse, but they are.

Chairman—continued.

3582. You would prefer that the same powers which were given in the Allotments Act of 1887 should be extended to any Act dealing with small holdings?—Yes; I think that the Government should be empowered to settle the matter.

3583. Do you think that the local authorities would deal satisfactorily with a business of that kind?—I do not know; I have not much faith in local authorities.

3584. What authority would you like to deal with it?—I should like the Government to do it for the country.

3585. Have you faith in the Government?—I have this faith in it, that I think they are sent there for the purpose of doing it; that is to legislate for the country.

3586. Legislation is one thing; administration another. The question is who is to manage this; do you think that the Government have so little to do that they could easily, properly and wisely manage small holdings in all parts of the United Kingdom?—They could pay somebody to look after it.

3587. They would have to pay a good number of people to look after it, would they not?—They have to pay people to look after a great many other things; they have to pay people to do the collecting of taxes and so on.

3588. Do you know anything about the administration of Crown land?—No, I cannot say that I do; I never occupied any of it.

3589. Or the administration of the Woods and Forests?—No, I have no experience of that.

3590. Your faith in the Government, then, is not due to any experience of the way in which they already manage those matters?—Certainly not. Of course I know that they have not passed any Small Holdings Bill as yet that has been of any benefit.

3591. I am not talking of the legislation which might be passed by the Government; but when they have passed a law offering facilities for small holdings, I want to know who is to manage the small holdings. Mr. Jesse Collings in his Bill proposes that facilities should be given to local authorities to buy land in each district, each local authority managing for its own district; you say that you have not faith in local authorities, but you would have the Government do it?—I must rather recall that remark, because I misunderstood you. I have faith enough in local authorities to carry out the laws as made in the House of Commons.

3592. You think they ought not to make the law; you are not in favour of home rule to that extent?—I am in favour of home rule.

3593. But you do not carry it out so far as to wish that the local authorities should have these powers?—Not to make the law, but to administer it.

3594. You would not object to local authorities managing the land, then?—No, I should not object their administering it, if the House of Commons passes a Bill of the description of Mr. Collings' Bill, or a little better if you like to make it so. The better you make it for the workman the better it will be for the whole country.

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Chairman—continued.

3595. Do you think that a speculation of this kind would be safe for the ratepayers?—I do not see why it should not. As an illustration, I may say during the last five years we reckon that our farm is worth very nearly 1,000 *l.* more than when we took it. We can produce from five to six quarters of corn to the acre; and we are all very well assured that if the land of England was all utilised as this land is utilised, and its produce was the same as this, there would be no necessity to go to foreign countries for one quarter the corn we do now. So that such a scheme must be a benefit to the country at large.

3596. The production would be very much larger, and you consider that the risk would not be excessive?—Not so great as the benefit.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

3597. Did you say that there were 500 small owners in the neighbourhood of Wellingborough?—No; I said there is about 500 acres occupied by small owners of allotments and small holdings in the neighbourhood of Wellingborough.

3598. Do you live in Wellingborough?—Yes.

3599. I think you said you could do with 5,000 acres more?—Yes, round there.

3600. Who would it be cultivated by?—The inhabitants of Wellingborough and the villages surrounding; not the villages very far off, but some closely connected with Wellingborough; there are some within a mile and three-quarters.

3601. I understand you contemplate that these 5,000 acres should be occupied by people who have already got dwelling-houses of their own?—No; if the small holdings are provided I should like to see a house and proper outbuildings attached to them so that the parties may be close to their work.

3602. You said that the holding should be from 10 or 15 to 40 acres; what would it cost to provide the necessary buildings for a holding of 10 acres?—My calculation is for a holding of 20 acres; it would not take much more building for that than for 10 acres. I should say it would want about 300 *l.* for the house and outbuildings. My calculation is that he would pay 15 *l.* for the buildings and 25 *s.* an acre, that would be 25 *l.* a year for the land; that is for 20 acres.

3603. You would not take holdings so small as 10 or 15 acres?—It might do to vary them; I would not draw a line to say that it should be either 15 or 20 acres. You might go from 10 acres upwards.

3604. You have not made a calculation, I understand, as to what the cost of buildings for 10 acres would be?—I do not think you could do it for much less if you had proper buildings.

3605. Would it not rather stand in the way of the fair profit if you had to spend 300 *l.* to begin with on 10 acres of land for buildings; it would be very difficult to make a profit afterwards, would it not?—I have put it down at 15 *l.* in my calculations; that is giving 5 per cent. upon the 300 *l.*, but it might be done easily, I think, for a less percentage than that.

3606. Supposing you have to spend 300 *l.* on a 10-acre holding, you would have to reckon the interest on that to start with in your calculations?—By my statistics the man would realise a good

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

profit even if he pays the interest on the 300 *l.* at 5 per cent. I reckon the interest on the building 15 *l.* a year for the 20 acres, and the rent at 25 *s.* an acre.

3607. We are taking a holding of 10 acres now?—Of course the out-buildings would take nearly as much for 10 acres as they would for a 40-acre holding.

3608. I understood you to say that 300 *l.* would be necessary for the buildings for 20 acres, and that you could not do it for very much less for 10 acres?—Not for the buildings.

3609. The interest upon the expenditure for buildings would be 15 *l.*?—Yes, taking it at 5 per cent.

3610. What would be the rent of 10 acres?—At 25 *s.* an acre, it would be 12 *l.* 10 *s.*

3611. The interest and the rent together would come to about 27 *l.* 10 *s.* a year?—Yes.

3612. Do you not think that that would be a very heavy rent for a 10-acre holding?—It would.

3613. Would it be possible to make a profit out of that?—It would be a heavy rent. But there is one thing you might do, you might get the buildings erected at a less percentage.

3614. In any case, for a holding of that size, allowing for the interest on the buildings, as well as the rent, it would come to a very heavy rent altogether, must it not?—It would; it would come to very little heavier rent for 20 acres than it would for 10. Your buildings and outbuildings are costing something considerable on a 10-acre holding.

3615. As a matter of fact, I suppose the buildings that are requisite for 10 acres would very nearly do for a holding of 40 acres?—No doubt they would.

3616. You only contemplate that this should be done where the land is good, as I understand; you would not propose to divide up bad land into small holdings and spend this large sum upon it, would you?—I should propose to get the best I possibly could.

3617. You gave us a balance-sheet just now. I understand, in your calculations, all the produce was consumed off the land; it was all sold?—It was all sold off the land; but it would be a mistake to do that.

3618. Then why do you present us with a balance-sheet in that form?—I will give it to you in both ways, if you like. I will give it this way: it would produce the amount I have given at the selling price; I will now qualify that by saying that, if you can utilise the whole of the produce by stock-keeping you very nearly double that.

3619. Then on these 500 acres that you speak of is stock kept?—Yes.

3620. On all the holdings?—Not on all the holdings, because there is not the facility. The farm I am intimately connected with is 183 acres.

3621. That is a large farm?—Yes, that is cut up in allotments and small holdings. But, as regards the other allotments which I have also mentioned, which make it up to 500 acres, you will understand it is all round the town in different

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

ferent parts. Some of it is occupied by greengrocers and different people of that sort. On our farm we have got several who keep cows, horses, and pigs; these are men who had nothing of the kind before this farm came into our possession. Some of them have started as greengrocers on their own account.

3622. In the balance-sheet which you gave us, in which you have allowed for all the produce being sold off the farm, surely the sum of money you have allowed for manure to be brought back on to it is very small, is it not?—Yes; but it will do it.

3623. With all the produce sold off?—Yes; there are scores and hundreds of our farms that do not get 1 *l.* per acre laid out upon them in manure. One pound per acre would manure the land well. It would put four loads to the acre of good rotten dung; and four loads to the acre will keep your acre in capital good order.

3624. Where do they get the manure; have they facilities for buying it in Wellingborough?—Yes. In selling his straw, a man might make a bargain with the party to sell his straw and get manure back.

3625. The case is rather exceptional, is it not, because you have facilities in the town for getting the manure close by?—Yes; but in small holdings there would be better facilities if you could make your own manure.

3626. You have expressed the opinion that there must be powers of compulsion in any Bill to make it effective for taking the land?—Yes; I think it would be a great deal easier if it was made compulsory.

3627. Is it not the fact that there is a great deal of land in the market at the present time?—Yes, I believe there is.

3628. Why is there any difficulty in buying it without compulsion?—If you have the local authority to administer this, and give them the privilege of doing it, or not doing it, you give them a chance to stand on one side, and let things go on as they are; but if you pass a Bill, saying they shall do it, then they know they will have to do it, and they will do it.

3629. As I understand, you want to go a great deal further than any compulsory Bill has done; you desire to make it compulsory upon the local authority to buy land, and also compulsory upon the landowners to sell?—I want the local authority to thoroughly understand that if a Bill of the description of Mr. Jesse Collings's is passed with compulsory clauses, and you say in the Bill that the local authority shall administer it, they will have to do so.

3630. I want to get clearly at what your idea of compulsion is; is the landowner to be compelled to sell the land whether he wishes or not?—Yes, he should be.

3631. Is the local authority to be compelled to buy it?—Yes.

3632. You wish to have compulsion all round?—I wish to have compulsion all round.

3633. So as to insure the thing being carried out?—Yes. When you pass a Bill to enable a railway to go through a rich man's estate you have a compulsory Bill, and if this scheme is going to benefit the labourer I should say make it compulsory.

3634. I want to take you a step further. When a landowner has been compelled to sell the land, and the local authority has been compelled to buy it, is the tenant to be compelled to take it too?—The tenant shall have the facility to take it if he thinks well.

3635. Supposing that a tenant could not be got to take it, what is the local authority to do with it?—The local authority will ascertain previous to purchasing the land whether they have got tenants for it or not.

3636. They are not to be compelled to buy till they first ascertain whether they have got a market?—They are not to be compelled to buy 1,000 acres if they only want 500, certainly.

3637. You said that another reason why compulsion was necessary was that so many people were averse to small holdings; among what class do you find that feeling?—Not among the poorer class, but among the landlord class; the farming class.

3638. Do you think in these days there is any unwillingness on the part of landlords class, as a rule, to encourage small holdings, as I admit was probably the case formerly?—If it is not the rule there are exceptions.

3639. Do you not think, on the contrary, that most landowners are anxious to increase the number of small holdings?—If they are anxious for their own welfare they are.

3640. Is it not for their own welfare?—It is, if they can but see it.

3641. It is very much easier in these days to let a small farm than a large one, is it not?—Yes.

3642. Therefore probably the aversion which you think exists among landlords will become less?—It would disappear, I think.

3643. You say there is also an aversion among the farming class?—Yes.

3644. What does that arise from?—I do not know; perhaps it is that they are jealous and think the labourers will supersede them in the culture of land. I think it must be that.

3645. You think that they are afraid if the labourers had great facilities for getting small holdings that it might interfere with their getting the use of their labour?—I hardly know whether that grasps the matter. I think they are jealous of the labourer rising, and that makes them averse?—Our farming class are not a very intellectual class as a rule.

3646. Not so intellectual as the labouring class, do you think?—Well, both of them might be better.

3647. You expressed the opinion once or twice that you had no great faith in the local authority; have you ever heard of Lord Ashbourne's Act in Ireland?—Yes; I have read a great deal about Ireland lately.

3648. That is an Act by which the Government are empowered to give facilities to tenants of farms in Ireland to purchase the land for themselves, and the arrangements are transacted directly by the Government. In carrying out any system for extending small holdings in this

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

country, would you prefer to see the whole thing carried out by the central Government, or would you prefer that the local authority should have some share in it?—With regard to Lord Ashbourne's Act, I suppose it acts very well in Ireland?—I think what is good for Ireland, perhaps, might be good for England, and what is good for England might be good for Ireland.

3649. On the whole, if you saw your way to it, you would prefer that the Act should be administered by the central authority?—I should have no objection, but after the explanation that the Chairman gave just now, I can hardly see how the Government could do it.

3650. If it could be shown to you that it could be carried out satisfactorily by the central authority, you would have no objection?—I would have no objection at all.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

3651. How did you raise your money to get this farm?—We were in a bit of a difficulty in regard to taking this farm in this way: we had no money, and people are often in difficulties when they have not money, and we were in difficulties, and we tried to see if we could find a friend or two to stand bondsmen for our half year's rent. We were not registered, but we were an association, in the sense that we had a good many members, 60 or 70. We tried all we could do under the Allotments Acts of 1882 to make the Charity Commissioners give us some land. We had got some land in Wellingborough which we thought was eligible under that Act, and no doubt we have a right to it at the present time, but we cannot make the Charity Commissioners think so; so we could not get any charity land. This farm happened to fall out of occupation, and we decided, if possible, that we would take this farm, although it was a big venture, as we could not get any other land. We got into a correspondence with the landlord through a very kind solicitor in Wellingborough, who sympathises with us in this movement, and we got so far as this: That if we could get two bondsmen of the town to take this land we should have it, and the landlord would be perfectly willing to let it. We tried to get bondsmen, and we had promises from one or two, who said they thought they could help us, but they made one excuse or another, and at last we were left to our own resources. We said then we would offer the landlord that, instead of two bondsmen, 12 of us would be guarantors for the rent, and we would also pay a half-a-year's rent in advance. We did do that, and that is how we got the land.

3652. Then you divided that land among your members?—Yes, in different plots.

3653. According to their wishes?—Yes.

3654. Do you find that the result of this division of land among your members beneficial to them individually?—Very beneficial.

3655. Are there very few failures?—There are no failures at all.

3656. And they are generally better off?—Yes.

3657. Is there less pauperism in the district?

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

—Yes, I believe there is, because there is more labour.

3658. And there is more food?—Yes, there is no dearth of vegetables in Wellingborough, I assure you.

3659. You send your produce there, do you not?—Yes, a good deal of it.

3660. You said you thought that permanent leasehold was as good for people as a freehold with a quit rent?—I do not see why it should not be.

3661. Do you not think that the very idea of ownership would be an advantage?—It might; it is a point I have not considered very greatly.

3662. You said that there would be difficulties with regard to compulsion; you want compulsion to be thorough in order to make the Act work?—Yes.

3663. That is to say, that the compulsion should give the local authority power to buy land when wanted, but you would have the local authority only act on the initiative of the ratepayers of the district, that is, that the ratepayers of the district would have to move the local authority in the first instance to take the step?—I think the Government would move the local authority; the Government would make the law.

3664. You would not compel the local authority in all cases to buy land, but only when it was needed?—Yes; when application was made.

3665. When the people in the district demanded it, and there was a sufficient demand to justify them in so doing?—Yes.

3666. You say that if there were not compulsion to fall back upon the purchase of such land would be met with difficulties?—Yes.

3667. Those difficulties are of two classes; first, that the landlords are not willing to sell for the purpose?—Yes.

3668. And secondly, that the farmers would be averse to the labourers getting this land for themselves?—Yes.

3669. Why would they be averse?—I can hardly explain why they should be, but we find it so.

3670. The labourers, in fact, would be in a more independent position, I suppose?—They would if the Bill provided those powers.

3671. Do you think that it would tend to raise the rate of wages among the labourers?—I wish it would.

3672. Might that be a source of objection?—It might be so with the farmers.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3673. I wish to ask you one or two questions with regard to the 10-acre and 20-acre holding about which Mr. Chaplin put a question to you. He asked whether a 10-acre plot would need buildings of about the same value as a 20-acre plot, and you said you thought it would in the main?—I think it would.

3674. Have you worked it out? For a 20-acre plot of land with a 300 *l.* of building, what would be the rent?—I reckon 15 *l.* for the building and 25 *l.* rent, that would be 40 *l.*

3675. That would be 2 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

3676. If

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

3676. If the buildings were put upon a 10-acre plot have you computed what it would be?—No.

3677. It would come to 2 *l.* 15 *s.*, would it not?—Yes.

3678. That is 15 *s.* an acre more?—Yes.

3679. Do you think that 15 *s.* an acre more would be a ruinous rental for a man to have to pay?—I think it would be too much.

3680. But would it be ruinous; would it prevent a man taking it?—It would not be ruinous, but still it would prevent him making so good a return.

3681. If I followed your balance sheet it gives the rent at 40 *l.*, that is 15 *l.* for the buildings and 25 *l.* for the land; is there anything allowed for tithes, rates, and taxes?—No; these would have to be that considered.

3682. You have not included these?—No.

3683. Then your balance-sheet is not an actual balance-sheet?—No; it is just what can be produced from 20 acres. There would be that to be added.

3684. It gives the net profit at 96 *l.* for the 20 acres, that is 4 *l.* 16 *s.* an acre profit?—Yes.

3685. If the straw were consumed on the farm, which you estimate to be worth 40 *l.*, do you believe that it would bring in a larger net profit to the occupier?—Yes; and the corn as well. If the corn were consumed as well by the cattle, and the roots were consumed to a great extent, you would nearly double your amount of account.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

3686. Can you see any difference between a perpetual lease, a perpetual tenure where a man cannot be turned out, and ownership?—No; very little.

3687. Would it, or would it not, be better if a man instead of paying down a lump sum, or paying money towards ownership, to keep that money for the cultivation of his farm, manuring and stock?—It would be a good deal better for him to keep it.

3688. Always supposing that he has this perpetual tenure?—Yes, that is it.

3689. Let me put this case to you; supposing a man bought of a local authority 400 *l.* worth of land, and he paid down a fourth (that is 100 *l.*), do you think, to begin with, that 100 *l.* paid down would be sufficient security for the local authority?—It would, no doubt; but if he could keep it to work his land with it would be much better for him.

3690. With regard to the remaining 300 *l.*, he would never be required to pay it, but he would have to pay a quit-rent, say of 4 per cent. upon it?—Yes.

3691. That would be 12 *l.* a year for the time he was there, whatever that might be; and he would be able to sell it or leave it to his children, always subject to the payment of 12 *l.*?—Yes, I follow you.

3692. Do you think that that would be a favourable method for him?—I think if you have fixity of tenure that would be quite as good as having ownership.

3693. According to this proposal he pays down 100 *l.*, and he becomes owner subject to the payment of 12 *l.* in the shape of interest for the remaining period?—Yes; but a perpetual lease would be just as well.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

3694. Are you supposing that with a perpetual lease a man would be able to sell his holding?—No, not to sell the holding; he would be a tenant of his holding.

3695. But supposing with a perpetal lease he was unsuccessful, or met with a misfortune, and wanted to give it up, what then?—A difficulty would arise there.

3696. Would not the other plan have all the advantages of a perpetual lease, and of ownership, by, at the same time, enabling him to sell at any time for the best price he could get in the market?—There is one difficulty in that, namely, that it is very likely that you would keep out some of the most industrious and intelligent men if you say a man shall pay down so much money. Those are the men that I do not want to see excluded from the benefits of any Act. I should like to see included in its benefits all careful and industrious men, who through misfortune, or their large families, or anything of that sort, might not be able to pay down any money at all. I say that that man should not be excluded from the benefit of the Act, as he would be under those circumstances.

3697. Admitting that the Act does not affect that man, do you not think an Act that offers these facilities would be an inducement to a large number of people to try and save a little money or to borrow a little money?—It might be so; but you would exclude some of the best and most intelligent agricultural labourers if you were to compel them to pay down a certain amount of money, because it is impossible for a man to pay down money if he has not got it.

3698. How would you propose that the local authority should meet that difficulty?—I can hardly see; perhaps the difficulty would be met in this way: If the local authority purchase land for their applicants, this man without capital to lay down for the 25 *l.*, would have a chance of taking some of this land; he may, perhaps, in that way, take a small piece, though at the same time, I quite admit he cannot cultivate land without money.

3699. In addition to allowing the man to acquire land under this plan, if he could, you would by some means enable him to hire or rent some land?—Yes, and also borrow money to work it; I think there should be some facilities given for borrowing.

3700. Have you any hope that the local authorities, who are the ratepayers, would consent to lend money to individual owners to work their land?—Mr. Chaplin referred to what was now done in Ireland under Lord Ashbourne's Act. I believe 5,000,000 *l.* were granted for Ireland last Session, and, if so, why should not the same thing be done in England?

3701. That was not for working the farms; that was for buying. Without saying whether this proposal is a good thing or a bad thing, you will probably agree that it is of no use Parliament making a law that no body of ratepayers, called the local authority, will ever put in force?—It is not.

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

3702. It is of no use to tantalise labourers with promises which we all know can never be fulfilled?—No.

3703. As you are aware, the proposal in the Bill is that the man shall find a proportion of the purchase money (we will not say 25 per cent.), in order to secure the local authority from loss; do you think that any local authority can be found who would not only supply a man with land up to the full amount, but also furnish him with money to stock it; that is to supply him with capital as well?—I do not think they would.

3704. That being so, do you think, as a practical man, that it is wise to advocate any scheme that we are quite certain the ratepayers will never put in force?—I do not think that the local authority would find the money; there must be some other plan provided for finding the money.

3705. You admit that to offer a man facilities for acquiring land as soon as he can save or borrow a small proportion of the purchase money is good, as far as it goes?—Yes, it is good; it is giving some a chance which they have not got at the present time; but it will have the effect of excluding some. If, however, you can provide only for a portion it will be a step in the right direction to that extent.

3706. Do you think it would be an inducement to save to labourers and workmen, and others, starting in life to have this prospect before them?—I believe it would have that beneficial effect.

3707. I want to ask you a question or two upon this subject of compulsion; do you think that the land bought in the open market under the voluntary system (that is between buyer and seller) is bought cheaper than when bought under compulsion?—I do not know; I do not think it would make much difference.

3708. You are aware, are you not, that under the compulsory powers, when land is bought by railway companies for instance, the land is very much higher in price?—Yes, they put a big price upon it because it is going to bring a big return.

3709. That would be unfavourable to the purchaser afterwards. If it could be bought voluntarily, the transaction would be cheaper, and easier, and quicker, would it not?—It might be so.

3710. Therefore, admitting that compulsory powers are good, would you, or would you not, have a Bill that offered every facility to the labourers and to purchasers, by means of land hired by the local authority under permissive clauses, and not compulsory clauses, so far as it would operate?—We do not know how far it would operate.

3711. The question I ask is this: should you not consider a Bill passed by Parliament giving those facilities as of great importance and great value?—I would not exclude the whole of the population, because I could not include the whole of them.

3712. If, after trying this Bill, it was found that the local authorities could not buy land, although they wanted to do so, do you not think it would be much easier to get compulsory powers when that was shown, than before?—No doubt of it.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

3713. Then, on the whole, failing your getting these compulsory powers of purchase, you would value a Bill with all the other clauses and facilities, but which had not compulsory powers?—I would value the Bill as being a step in the right direction.

3714. You understand, I think, what we mean by compulsion; there never was any compulsory power in any Bill to compel the local authorities to put the Bill in force, was there?—In the Bill of 1882 I believe there was a compulsory clause for charity land.

3715. That was to compel the trustees to sell?—Yes; and, if they fail, then the Commissioners.

3716. Where we speak of compulsory clauses, we mean to give the local authorities compulsory powers to purchase land, whether the owner is willing to sell or not?—Yes; you must do that, or else it would not be compulsory.

3717. You spoke about the difficulty with regard to building on a farm; are you aware that the propositon is to lend money for buildings on these farms?—That would just meet my idea.

3718. Are you aware of the terms on which the money is to be lent?—I have not got it in my mind just now.

3719. Will you take it from me that it is to be lent and repaid, capital and interest, in 35 years at a low rate of interest; do you think that that would meet the difficulty with regard to buildings?—Yes; if it were at the lowest interest. In 35 years it is very possible, at the lowest interest a man might gain his homestead. I think that would work very well indeed.

Sir *George Campbell.*

3720. You have told us a good deal about 20-acre allotments; your experience is chiefly with regard to people, is it not, who have other occupations besides their land, shoemakers and the like?—Yes.

3721. What amount of land do you think that a working shoemaker could hold with advantage?—Not such a very great deal.

3722. How much?—Twenty or 40 poles would be quite sufficient for him to manage with his trade; he would be an allotment holder. There are some working shoemakers who are very good gardeners and farmers too; if they can farm 20 or 40 poles well, they can farm an acre well.

3723. You would not go beyond an allotment for that class of people, I understand?—No; we have not many applications from that class at all.

3724. Carters and carriers and people of that kind might occupy six or eight acres you think?—Yes; there are lots of them in Wellingborough would be only too glad to get that amount; that I can confidentially say, because being secretary of this association, I have many facilities of knowing. For instance, there was a farm some years ago of 400 acres in the market. We could not get the farm upon a lease, and therefore it was no good our trying for it; but to show you the demand, I may mention that in a fortnight's time I had the book half full of applicants for this farm, and there would have been no difficulty at all in letting it. I could have got sufficient to take

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

take it at 20 acres each or less than that; some of them made applications for 30 acres.

3725. What class of people were they?—They were men with other occupations, with horses, doing carter's work and so on; I find that those are men that it suits very well indeed. Of course if such a man got 30 acres in addition to what he had got he would have to give up some of his carting.

3726. You think that in the neighbourhood of country towns and villages there are generally a large number of people who would like to have a little bit of land in addition to their other occupations?—Yes; I have every confidence in its being a success if it is but carried out. Knowing what I do of the manner in which this farm has been taken up, and the benefits that have been derived from it, I feel thoroughly convinced that if you give the agricultural labourers or anybody facilities to acquire small holdings it will be the finest thing for the country that has ever been granted.

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Wednesday, 22nd May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Compton Lawrence.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir Walter Foster.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. ELIAS PITTS SQUAREY, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

3727. YOU are a land agent, I think?—I am a land agent.

3728. And where is your practice?—Our chief practice is at Salisbury, but we have offices in London, in Great George-street, Westminster, as well.

3729. I think you are President of the Institute of Surveyors?—Yes.

3730. And a director of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company?—I am.

3731. Speaking generally, what is your opinion in reference to small holders; are you in favour of small holdings?—As an individual I am most anxious to see the system of small freeholds extended to any reasonable extent.

3732. May I separate for a moment small freeholds from small tenancies. I understand that you are in favour of the multiplication of small freeholds supposing that can be done economically and properly?—Most certainly.

3733. Are you also in favour of small tenancies as contrasted with large tenancies?—I have to remark that my experience tells me distinctly that the size and character of holdings of land throughout England depends entirely upon its physical character. In the large chalk districts of England you cannot under the present condition have small holdings; they cannot be economically worked as small holdings; there would be plenty of candidates to take the lower and better land in the valleys; but the upper and distant lands would be untenanted and unoccupied unless cottages and other buildings were erected. These would, I think, be almost worthless if the system of small holdings were applied only to the valley lands.

3734. That is to say, that the small holders cannot be expected to take the upper and poorer lands which would then remain untenanted if they were separated from the lower and richer lands?—Certainly; it would simply drift into a sheep walk.

3735. Do you think that that would be the case if there were buildings on the upper lands?

Chairman—continued.

—For the most part there are buildings at the present time existing on the upper lands which have been erected for the economical management and working of those lands in connection with the low valley lands.

3736. Supposing that the buildings were multiplied on the upper lands, would they then be suitable for small holdings?—They would be suitable in a certain sense. But my experience as a land agent tells me that the farmers who are occupying these farms in the valleys, and have these upper down or distant buildings, as we term them, with cottages attached to the homesteads, have the greatest difficulty now in getting people to reside in those cottages.

3737. Why is that?—First of all, the women object to it; and they are a very great force in all these matters.

3738. Is it because they are far from any social life?—They are far from civilization, far from schools, far from churches and chapels, and are isolated, no doubt. Many of them are a mile and a half from other residences, except of a kindred character on the adjoining farms.

3739. Then I understand your view to be that there are cases in which the multiplication of small holdings at the present time is economically impossible?—I would not say that it is impossible; but under the present dispensation I do not believe that the distant lands to which I have referred in that particular district, the chalk district, would be available for small holdings. I do not think you would find any one who would occupy them.

3740. Still I suppose, even putting them entirely on one side, that there are over the whole of the United Kingdom very large quantities of land that would be available and suitable for small holdings?—A very large quantity of land. As I have said, the character of the soil and the surrounding circumstances influence the application of land, whether in large, moderate size, or small holdings.

3741. Following up the statement that in your opinion it is desirable that these small holdings should

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Chairman—continued.

should be multiplied, I would ask you whether at the present time there are any legal or legislative obstructions to the creation of small holdings?—There are legal obstructions existing from the difficulty of obtaining land and of its sub-division; the legal expenses incident are very great. There is further an economical difficulty in regard to these small holdings; I, perhaps, have rather too much in my mind the type of land of the chalk districts in England with which I am very largely connected. There would be the difficulty of buildings; the constructive value of buildings is never realised in any subsequent dealings with them.

3742. You think that the costs of transfer and the difficulty of subdividing land constitute obstacles at the present time to the creation of small holdings?—Most distinctly.

3743. Do you suggest any legislation for lessening those obstacles?—I am thoroughly in accord and sympathy with Lord Cairns' Bill, and I have read the present Bill of Lord Halsbury, which is before a Committee, with every sympathy and feeling that the legislation indicated therein is in the right direction.

3744. May I ask you whether you are in favour of registration?—Certainly I am in favour of registration; and I have a view of my own, which I cannot help thinking would, up to a certain point be applicable, now that we have these splendid Ordnance maps which are available for the purpose of actually fixing boundaries.

3745. I may take it, may I not, that any system of complete registration, by cheapening the transfer of land and facilitating the transfer of land, would tend very much to the creation of small holdings?—It would tend very much, as I believe, to the subdivision of land in sales; and moreover, although this is an incident merely, it would add to the value of land, because the cost of transfer is a tax upon the vendor.

3746. I want particularly to draw your attention to its possible effect upon the creation of small holdings; I quite understand that it would improve the value of land, but I am not quite clear that it would be to the advantage of persons who desire to obtain small holdings?—It would mitigate, if not almost remove those heavy expenses incident to the transfer of land, and the vendor and purchaser would both of them gain by the simplification of such transfer. At present it is a tax that has to be borne by somebody.

3747. Do you consider that Lord Cairns' Act and the Bill to which you refer go far enough in this direction?—I think they do. I have believed, and I still believe, that the abolition of the power to settle and entail lands would be a great benefit to the community; and I am sure, a great benefit also to the parties holding land.

3748. Leaving out of sight for a moment any proposals for facilitating the purchase of land by small holders, do you consider that there are any other legislative measures which would tend in that direction; I am speaking now of legislation in the direction of what is called free land?

Chairman—continued.

—Do you mean by that the nationalisation of the land?

3749. No; I rather mean the alteration of the custom of entail and primogeniture, and of settlement?—Yes. I have said that I think it would be thoroughly desirable under careful and cautious conditions, that those powers should be absolutely removed. Of course I would carefully guard all vested interests at the present time, they should be carefully respected; and I would also concede the power to charge lands which, if we had registration of title, would not increase the difficulties of transfer.

3750. Coming back to your experience of small holders I would ask you whether you have any personal knowledge of small holdings in any part of England?—Yes. It is my good fortune to live near the New Forest, and in the immediate vicinity of my place, and of a property which we manage adjoining, the small holders flourish.

3751. May I ask whether they are small holders who have become so through squatting?—Yes, they are small holders who have become freeholders through squatting; they have stolen the lands, no doubt, from the Crown in previous times when there was not the same supervision exercised over the Crown's rights which now obtains.

3752. And they are now practically recognised as freeholders?—Yes, undoubtedly.

3753. What is your general opinion of the character of this class of the population?—They are wonderfully thrifty, industrious, and capable men; the cleverest of them emerging from their condition frequently, and becoming larger farmers: they live hard, industrious lives, and during the summer, the males, the fathers and sons, migrate from their homes to the adjoining large arable farms lying some 10 or 12 miles distant from them, where they earn large wages in skilled work, such as turnip-hoeing, reaping, and harvesting. I have known them working from half-past two in the morning, and earning large wages even in our depressed agricultural district.

3754. These are cases of people who are not entirely depending upon their own holdings, but who have extraneous means of adding to their earnings?—Yes, certainly; they could not live on their holdings.

3755. Their holdings are too small to live on, in fact?—Yes, their holdings are practically a *pied à terre*, that is to say, a cottage with 40 or 50 poles of land which they have taken from the waste, and there they have gained their freehold.

3756. But even that limited possession of land, you think, is a good thing?—I am sure it is; it is good for every one.

3757. And would you say that that is a class of the population whom it is desirable to increase?—Yes, I should like to see them increased very much.

3758. Have you any experience of small holders who live on their holdings without any extraneous means?—Yes, we have small holders of various sizes in other districts in England which we look after; and I must say that, as a

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Chairman— continued.

rule, the small holders pay their rents very much better than the large holders do; there is less friction; they do not ask for money for improvements; they do not ask for expenditure; they are content to live in the normal condition, if I may so term it, and not to take part in the advancing luxury of the day. Adjoining the small holders of whom I speak, an estate which we look after is divided into small holdings; there are no holdings of more than 120 acres of land, but the people live there, and pay their rents and are extremely upset if there is anything like a suggestion of change for the convenience of putting two farms into one, or anything of that kind; therefore we leave them quite alone, and are well satisfied with the results.

3759. Speaking generally, would you say that these small holders of the class that I am now dealing with, depending wholly upon the land, have, on the whole, passed through the agricultural depression better than the larger ones?—Much better; they have not felt it really. I should add that these small holdings, of which I speak, in the New Forest, have all of them, under the Act of Enquiry, obtained forest rights; they turn out on the New Forest their ponies, their calves, their cows, and their pigs in pannage time; it is a most valuable addition to them to have those rights adjoining their own houses.

3760. Do you think that the production of the land, in the case of these small holdings, is greater or less per acre than that of the large farms?—It is less, certainly; but I must ask you, if you will allow me, to separate the products. You are dealing, I presume, with the broad question of large against small holdings.

3761. Yes; and I would say that my question has reference to the whole produce of a farm, the money value of the production of a farm per acre; and I want you to contrast small with large holdings in that respect?—In that case, most emphatically, the balance of total produce is far greater on the large farms than it is on the small ones.

3762. That being so, how do you account for the greater success of the small as compared with the large farms?—It is a difficult riddle, but it is one that is solvable if you know intimately the surroundings of the two classes. I should like to put before you a statement of the holdings on Lord Bath's estates in Somersetshire and Wiltshire, which is extremely interesting. On Lord Bath's estates in Somersetshire and Wiltshire there are 381 small holdings, that is between two acres and 70 acres, and it is very interesting to consider the various soils on which these small holders are found. If you take the chalk districts of Lord Bath's estates, you will find that the small holders are few, although the general areas are large; if you take the green sand formation which underlies the chalk, and forms a charming easily worked soil in the near vicinity, you can at once realise what I have said, that the size of the holdings and their character depends upon their soil; there you get at once a large increase of small holdings, so that, practically, I, looking at this statement, can tell you at once, from the number of small holders, what the geological character of the soil is.

Chairman—continued.

3763. I quite follow you; but now will you go back to your question as to the relative production?—In separating produce I should tell you that from the small farms, poultry, vegetables even, not market gardens' produce, but vegetables are taken into Southampton from a distance. These Hampworth people, for instance, where the small holdings are, although they are 10 miles from Southampton, drive in their market carts to Southampton, taking in a few turnips, a few potatoes, a few carrots, and things of that kind, and a few faggots, which they sell retail, happily for the consumers, in Southampton, and they manage to make a living out of it.

3764. Therefore, in regard to those articles of produce, the small farms have an advantage over the large ones?—No, pardon me, they do not grow anything like so much as large farms adjoining that are rented relatively for half the money. For instance, in the Vale of Avon where I live, there is an alluvium on chalk with chalk hills on either side, the turnips grown are four times the weight of the turnips grown on these lands; but then, in that case, the farmer consumes them by the sheep, and in the other case they send them in for the purpose of human consumption at Southampton.

3765. But taking poultry, for instance, are not the small farmers better qualified to produce poultry in large quantities than the large ones?—Certainly they do it to a most wonderful extent.

3766. Then with regard to poultry, the production would be larger in their case?—Yes, decidedly.

3767. As regard vegetables, what would you say?—As regards vegetables of the type I have indicated, I do not set up these people as being market gardeners; they simply have these things and grow them and take them in to Southampton, and sell a great variety of produce, eggs, poultry, and such things, and the ambition of all these men is to become what they call a higgler, that is to say to become the buyer of the produce from their neighbours, to take the produce for them into Southampton and to get the profit of the middleman as well as that of the producers.

3768. With regard to vegetables for human consumption, I think I understand you to say that they produce more than the large farmers?—Yes.

3769. Then what are the crops in which they are at a disadvantage as compared with the large farmers?—They cannot grow wheat, they cannot grow oats, and they cannot grow barley in the sense that the large farmer does?

3770. And roots?—They do not grow 50 per cent. of the weight of roots that the large farmer grows.

3771. In proportion to their area, you mean?—I mean taking the actual crop grown per acre, a large farmer will grow from 16 to 18 tons of swedes per acre, and these people will not grow more than five or six tons; that is due very much indeed to the fact that the land is poorer,

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Chairman—continued.

poorer, and that they do not apply as much artificial manure.

3772. I will now put to you briefly the evidence which we have already received in order that you may make your comments upon it. We have been told by several witnesses, who have experience of these small farms, that owing to the fact that the small tenants do not spare their own labour and the labour of their families, and that they put more manure on to the land, and altogether work it more highly; they get a larger proportion of general produce than the large farmers; that in wheat, perhaps, they are at a disadvantage, although in some cases we have been told that even in wheat they equal or exceed the average production of the large farmer; but that in the case of what is called small produce they beat the large farmer hollow; that is the statement made to us from several districts in England. I should like to have your observations upon that?—I would say that in the case of these lands of Lord Bath's, particularly the lands at Cheddar, the cultivation by the small people there is admirable; they do not grow wheat much there, they grow oats, and grow very good oats. At Bratton and Corsley and Frome, which are all on the green sand or the new red sand-stone, near Frome, they grow admirable crops; they have largish villages, and they are able to get a good quantity of manure, and they grow most excellent crops. I am speaking now of farming as it was a few years ago, and not of farming as at the present time, because there are great disabilities now; the farms of Wiltshire are not farmed, as a rule, as well as they were 15 years ago; but going back to that period I would say that, certainly, the cereal produce of the small farmer is not so large as is that of the well cultivated farms of 500 and 600 and 800, to 1,000 acres.

3773. My original question was directed to the money value of the total produce. Estimating poultry, stock, pigs, vegetables, and every kind of produce, the statement made to us by other witnesses is that the amount obtained per acre by the small holder is undoubtedly larger than that obtained per acre by the large farmer?—I would say that the produce in the shape of poultry and pigs, and small vegetable produce is undoubtedly larger by the small holders than by the larger holders; but when large cultivations are in question, then I think that the balance is in favour certainly of the large holding, particularly in the shape of beef, mutton, wool, and cereal produce.

3774. I do not know whether you happen to have seen some tables which have been put before the Committee by Mr. Collings?—I have not, I am sorry to say.

3775. They are extracted from the Agricultural Returns, and they show that the proportion of stock, horses, cattle of all kinds, and pigs, is much greater per acre on holdings up to one hundred acres than it is upon holdings above one hundred acres?—That I should quite believe.

3776. With regard to sheep, I think the proportion is rather less; but of the other sorts of stock, the proportion is very much greater on the small holdings?—Undoubtedly; it follows as a natural sequence that it must be so.

3776. Then if that is so, the produce from these farms in those particulars must also be greater than that from the large farms?—Given like conditions surely; but the conditions are not parallel, and they cannot be made parallel. If I may illustrate this by taking a Wiltshire or Dorsetshire farm, it is usually a long parallelogram. I will take a farm of 1,000 acres in Wiltshire; the lower 50 acres is water meadow; the second 50 acres is good pasture; then we come to 200 acres of good arable land worth in the past 25 *s.* an acre; then to another section of arable land worth 15 *s.* an acre in the past; and then we come to the high down lands which are worth 5 *s.* to 8 *s.* an acre; compare those conditions, if you please, with the conditions of the small holder who has none of the bad land, but has all the good land. Obviously the produce per acre, from the small holding is bound to be larger than from that from the large holding.

3778. Then that would be because by a natural process the small holders get hold of good land?—They will not go as I have said to these upper poor lands; they cannot go there, they could not live there; the area for living is not present there.

3779. Therefore, what you would say is, that if you confined the comparison to the best land of the large farmers, then their products would be greater than those from similar lands in the hands of small holders?—No, I would not say that at all. I am dealing with the abstract question of the difference in the produce per acre between the small farms and the large farms; it is not a platform on which a sound conclusion can be arrived at unless you know all the conditions.

3780. These small holdings as a rule, we have been told, pay a higher rent than the large ones; is that your experience?—Undoubtedly they pay considerably higher rent per acre on account of the fact that they are retail instead of wholesale dealings. The net income to the landlord is not to be measured, however, by the fact of the actual greater amount of rent paid; because for the small holding there is a larger expenditure for repairs and maintenance of the buildings than he would have, relatively, per acre, on the large holdings.

3781. But I think you have told us that the small holdings pay their rent better?—They pay their rents admirably.

3782. Does not that compensate the landlords for any extra expense?—Yes; but I am thinking of those halcyon days when the large farmers paid their rents as well and as cheerfully as the small ones.

3783. At the present time then it would probably pay the landlord as well to let at the same rent to a small farmer as to a large one?—Yes, and we should be only too happy if that were possible. I am speaking, I believe, in the presence of a client who is a very large owner of land, and I can only say that if it were possible I should be willing to advise the splitting up 10,000 acres

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Chairman—continued.

10,000 acres of land on two estates in that neighbourhood at once into small holdings, if it were not for the awful consideration of the homesteads and buildings.

3784. In these cases where there were originally homesteads and buildings, have they been destroyed?—Your question leads up to a very interesting story of the past, the copyhold, life, and leasehold system obtaining before the enclosures of land in England were undertaken. Every small copyholder under the lord of the manor had his homestead which he maintained himself, and his house and just a few buildings, and then he had his strips of common land over the whole area of the parish; they were aggregations dating from the Saxon times in many cases.

3785. But within what period have these buildings disappeared?—They have been in gradual process of disappearance during the last 25 or 30 years; because the copyhold and leasehold system has ceased to exist in the directions which I indicated, and, concurrently with that, the buildings occupied formerly by copyhold farmers and yeomen farmers, have come now to be occupied where they are good enough, by the labourers who live on the farms.

3786. And I suppose in the districts with which you are acquainted the process went on, which we have had described to us of consolidation of farms?—Yes, with I believe an immense increment of produce consequent upon that consolidation.

3787. At the time?—Yes.

3788. But I suppose that many landowners have seen reason to regret that aggregation, in consequence of the altered circumstances of agriculture?—They have had grave reason to regret that aggregation in consequence of the altered circumstances of agriculture; but I think that aggregation was largely in consequence of the circumstances of the holdings. I do not know whether any of the Committee have ever seen one of the old common fields; there are only two existing that I know of; one is in Dorset and the other near Royston; and they are extremely interesting. But it was clear that under anything like advancing agriculture, for economical working, for the increment of stock and sheep, the conditions which then obtained were absolutely inconsistent with any advance in those directions.

3789. I quite understand the ideas which led to the consolidation of farms; but I want to put this to you; where small holdings exist the people are accustomed are they not, to put much more labour into the land than they would do as hired labourers?—No doubt they work better; we all of us should do so.

3790. If you were to make a balance sheet and charge those people with all their own labour, I assume that economically it would not be a success?—The men I have specially referred to, these freeholders on the edge of the New Forest would simply starve if they had to pay labour.

3791. But that being so, that being in effect human nature, is not that a reason why the smaller culture should be better and more productive than the large?—Yes; given the same conditions, obviously the small farmer will grow more than the large farmer will.

Chairman—continued.

3792. When a man is working upon his own property his labour is in part, at all events, a recreation to him?—Yes, with a qualification; I mean that he works too hard almost.

3793. He may work too hard?—He works too hard.

3794. Although, therefore, you could not justify the sub-division of farms economically, if the whole expenditure of labour were rated at the average value of labour, yet in existing circumstances it may well be that a small farm may be profitable where large farming is a failure?—Undoubtedly it is so; the facts of the case bear out precisely the point you put to me.

3795. Then may I now ask you about Wiltshire; I remember when I was there I was shown one large estate, at all events, that was almost derelict, where good land was growing squitch?—Yes, I know it.

3796. Has that land been let since?—Part of it, I believe, has been let since.

3797. Would it not be a great advantage if that land was let to small holders?—To the owner of the holdings it would.

3798. And to the country too?—Obviously; it is clearly a most melancholy condition of things.

3799. Anything in reason that could substitute for that state of things; a state of things in which a large number of small holders were getting a thrifty and even a penurious living would be a good thing?—I have said that it would be one of the best consequences that could happen.

3800. Before coming to any facilities for that purpose I will just ask you whether you are aware of any cases of small holdings which have failed?—Yes, I referred to a very interesting case on which I believe you had the evidence of Mr. Ripley, and he I know gave you better evidence than I can.

3801. That is the case of Minster Lovel?—Yes; and he was able to give you better and later information than I could. I remember the foundation of Minster Lovel by Fergus O'Connor, and passing by it two or three times in the intervals of some 15 years, I saw that at one time it was distinctly what I consider a failure. I do not know this of my own knowledge, but I was told that the tendency had been to aggregate the 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 acre lots into a very few hands.

3802. Mr. Ripley, who lives there, speaks of a very considerable number of holders still existing on the land; although there has been some slight tendency to increase the small holdings, the number of small holders is very large in proportion to the area?—I am delighted to hear the present experience: certainly as the last time I saw it it looked in a very lamentable condition.

3803. Then we have later evidence of that, no doubt. Do you know anything personally as to the experiment made in Hampshire?—Yes, I know of that, although it was in my earliest youth, I remember seeing Robert Owen, Socialist Philanthropist, at a meeting in Winchester, at which Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright in

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Chairman—continued.

in 1846 were speaking in favour of free trade. Mr. Owen, a most benevolent charming man, was trying at that time the experiment of an association for farming at Harmony Hall, and some five or six philanthropists had given him 40,000 *l.* to try the experiment with. I just remember the 40 or 50 families living in one great house, the social system practically, and cultivating the land; but it resulted in most absolute and disastrous failure.

3804. But that was really not a system of small holdings, but rather a system of co-operative farming?—Certainly; its failure is not to be adduced as a failure of small holdings on the lines on which we are discussing it in other cases.

3805. I suppose I may take it then, that if you had the power you would gladly see an increase of small holdings and would like a system in which there should be holdings of all sizes?—Most certainly.

3806. And you would think that the best system of agriculture for this country?—Yes; and in saying that I think I am only expressing the wish of every landowner whom I have the honour to represent.

3807. Now as a matter of fact, do you think in your judgment that the number of small holdings has decreased or increased?—From what period?

3808. I said in your experience, say in the last 30 years?—Small holdings have decreased certainly in that time.

3809. To what do you attribute that?—To the indisposition first of the landowner to bear the cost of maintaining the larger number of homesteads, which are requisite for the application of small holdings.

3810. That applies of course to small tenancies?—Yes.

3811. There has been during that period this tendency to consolidate farms?—Yes, for the purposes of economical construction and maintenance and working.

3812. Then as regards freeholds, what has been the result upon freeholds?—The tendency has been of the most emphatic character. The capitalist who has made his money and sought the prestige of the position of the landowner, has been willing to accept a rate of interest of something like 2½ per cent., and in many cases 2 per cent. on his investment; so that the small holder was willing to accept the enormous price represented by a 2½ per cent. or 2 per cent. investment, the capital value in exchange for which he could use at the rate of 5, 6, or 7 per cent.

3813. There has been therefore a gradual absorption of these small holders tempted by the high prices they could get for their land?—Up to that time it has been inevitable; the small holder could not resist the temptation of terms in capital value, indicated by 2 per cent. and 2½ per cent., and the value of the money he could get.

3814. That has led of course to a constant drain upon the number of small holdings?—Yes, that has been the active cause.

3815. Has there been any tide flowing in the opposite direction to replace those who have withdrawn. I am speaking now of the small owners. I quite understand that, as you say, owing to these economical causes taking any existing number of small owners, they would tend gradually to disappear; but I want to know whether there has been anything working to replace others in their position?—I think not, except in the neighbourhood of large towns, where the increase of population and the increase of ability on the part of working people of large towns to buy, has extended the system of market gardens, and kindred management of that kind.

3816. But I think in regard to Belgium and France the evidence is to the effect that the small holders will pay higher prices than the large holders?—No doubt they will, and they always do pay higher prices.

3817. And therefore even the temptation the capitalists can offer has not been sufficient to materially lessen the number of small holdings in either of those countries?—I have never been in Belgium, but France I have seen, and I know fairly well the character of French agriculture, but I am not able to speak with any authority to what has been the result of the system.

3818. I think you may take it from me that there has been generally no considerable decrease in the number of small holdings. Can you suggest any reason why the temptation which has proved so strong in this country should not have proved equally strong in other countries?—I should believe that this has been an active cause, although I am rather travelling out of the line on which I may be supposed to speak with some little authority that there are so many more avenues for intelligent working men in this country as compared with what there are in France.

3819. I was going to ask you whether you do not think that the opportunities of acquiring land are greater in these foreign countries than they are here, and that therefore there is a continual influx of small holders which corresponds to the natural decrease, owing to the causes you have named, so that the balance is kept up?—I daresay that the facilities may be greater, but I am not able to speak with any authority on that point. I know the American system, but I do not know the French and Belgium systems as well. But to meet the requirements of those who desire to buy land in moderate areas, individuals have come forward for their own gain and have very successfully bought large estates and have cut them up into small quantities, and realized a great deal of money by that; they are called land butchers; and I have acted in some sense in the same capacity, and with very satisfactory results. Take Lord Mostyn's estates in Wales; I knew the man who bought those estates, and he bought them *en bloc*, and sold them in very small areas, some smaller, some larger, but he distributed them amongst the market according to what he believed would be the best course for the purpose of remunerating him for his risk and trouble.

3820. And he re-sold to small holders?—Many of them were very small; many of them were middle-sized

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Chairman—continued.

middle-sized. He cut up the estate to suit the markets as he thought. That is some 25 years ago.

3821. We have got it now that, in your opinion, it would be very desirable to stop this drain, and to increase the number of small holders, and we have also got it that you think that something might be done in the direction of Lord Cairns' Act by releasing land and making the transfer of land easier and cheaper. Now I want to ask you whether you have considered further proposals for increasing the facilities for the creation of small holders. In the first place I would ask you whether you are aware of the nature of recent land legislation in Ireland, of Lord Ashbourne's Act?—I am.

3822. What do you think of the possibility or advisability of applying some such legislation to England?—I am of course speaking not as a legislator; I am not a statesman.

3823. I ask you as a practical man, which perhaps is better?—I dissent from the whole system.

3824. Will you kindly tell us on what grounds you dissent from this system?—*Quoad* Ireland and the whole system of legislation incident to Ireland, although Ireland is an exceptional case, and exceptional circumstances have governed Ireland for very many years, still I think the tendency of legislation in favour of the occupiers has not resulted satisfactorily, so far as I am able to judge, in Ireland; I know Ireland very well.

3825. We want, of course specially to confine ourselves to this country, and we can only deal with Ireland so far as it is a guide to what would happen here; but I would point out to you that I am not asking you as to that portion of Irish legislation that has given security to the tenants and in other ways established a dual ownership, but I ask you to confine your attention to Lord Ashbourne's Act which gives facilities for making the tenant the absolute owner of the land?—Under the circumstances of Ireland Lord Ashbourne's Act has no doubt worked beneficially.

3826. Now will you tell us why you think that such an Act would not be applicable to this country?—I think the principle involved in Lord Ashbourne's Act would be of unwise application in England, because there is here no necessity for the interference of the State between individuals. I have indicated my conviction that the landowners of England, under the bitter experience of the past ten years, are as anxious as any men can be to part with a very large area of their land, and they know there can be nothing more absolutely conservative in social policy than that there should be an increased number of freeholders of varying areas.

3827. Then I would take it from you that you think that so far as the supply of land for such purposes goes, there is no necessity, artificially, to stimulate it?—Not the least.

3828. But is there a demand for such land at the present time?—There is not a demand for such land at the present time; we have land that we cannot sell.

3829. Is the reason for the absence of demand the absence of means on the part of the people who might become small owners?—Speaking as a director of the Small Farms and Labourers' Land Company our experience certainly is that there is not that disposition on the part of those for whom that company was formed to acquire the freehold which we should expect.

3830. But Lord Wantage, who has given us evidence on that point, has told us that there is a very great demand for tenancies?—Certainly.

3831. And he further explained to us that this demand coming from the immediate neighbourhood was first supplied by the company, and that they have not tested in any general sense whether or not there was a demand for freeholds?—No; the experience of our company is up to this point, that there are not a great number of people desirous of buying their freeholds.

3832. What I want to put to you is that I understand from Lord Wantage that there was no great demand for freeholds in the immediate neighbourhood of these properties?—No, there is not.

3833. But that he was not prepared to say that if the directors had determined that they would only sell and not lease, and had offered the land generally, they would not have found plenty of persons glad to take advantage of the conditions, that they had not tested it by making any general offer; that you have not advertised the land or anything of that sort?—No, but I think it has been pretty widely known. Our Small Farms Company has been fairly well trumpeted throughout the length and breadth of the land, and in the papers too which circulate amongst the classes from which buyers might be expected to come.

3834. Your experience would go to show that even if facilities were offered of the kind given by the Asbourne Act in Ireland there would be no large proportion of persons desirous of taking land who would take advantage of it?—I think there would be people if the same facilities were offered in England as are offered in Ireland. No doubt there are a great many people who would come forward to accept the very favourable terms on which they could start as landowners.

3835. The only difference, I think, between the facilities offered by the Ashbourne Act and the facilities offered by your company is the fact that the Ashbourne Act is based on a lower rate of interest?—Yes; the commercial element does not exist in Lord Ashbourne's Act.

3836. Supposing that the State were willing to try a similar experiment in this county, and on similar terms, you think there would be a demand?—Yes.

3837. You think it desirable to create these small holdings, and in fact you are a director of a company that has that as its object?—Yes, certainly.

3838. And which has only failed because the terms required by the commercial speculation are too high to tempt investors?—Yes.

3839. Let me ask you why, if it is desirable for the benefit of the community as a matter of national policy, to create these small holdings, you think it undesirable to offer the same facilities in England as are already offered in Ireland?—I have

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Chairman—continued.

—I have expressed approval of the application of the principle in Ireland, because of the circumstances of Ireland, but I believe that if the thing could be properly and well worked, it would be better done and can be better done by the individual than it can be done by the State, I feel this, that the moment the state commences to subsidise any particular class of persons, however desirable it may be to stimulate their increase, every other class will begin to ask that they may have the same facilities for carrying on their business as are given to the small holders.

3840. This is not a machinery to subsidise a class; the theory of the Ashbourne Act is that there should be no loss?—I have not read the Ashbourne Act carefully. I had rather in my mind the Small Holdings Bill, which is before Parliament now. There the rate of interest to be charged, and the proportion of loan to be advanced to intending purchasers is beyond the commercial value, and the proper amounts which the ordinary lender and the ordinary borrower would arrive at.

3841. Perhaps I had better put the Ashbourne Act to you. The Ashbourne Act provides that where the landlord and tenant agree for a transfer of ownership from the one to the other, and the Land Commission approve of the terms of the purchase, the whole amount of the purchase money shall be advanced by the State at a low rate of interest, a little less than 3 per cent. interest, with a sinking fund of a half per cent., which makes the tenant the absolute owner in 49 years?—Yes.

3842. And the State reserves as security one-fourth of this purchase-money, which is only paid over to the landlord after the instalments have amounted to a similar sum?—Yes.

3843. And I believe that the experience (which is only short, of course, up to the present time) has been exceedingly satisfactory so far as the regularity with which the instalments have been paid, and if the instalments are regularily paid of course the State will not lose anything by the transaction?—Certainly.

3844. It is that principle which I want you to consider as applied to this country?—Yes.

3845. You will see in the first place that it does not necessarily involve any loss to the State or any subsidy; it involves simply the use of the credit of the State for the benefit of the tenant?—Yes.

3846. I will remind you that you have shown your desire to create these small holdings by your connection with the Small Farms and Labourers Land Company?—Yes.

3847. But there the terms which you as private investors are forced to demand are too high to tempt the tenants?—Yes.

3848. Might it not be desirable that the State should intervene in this way in order to stimulate the creation of these small holdings?—I have been brought up in the doctrine of *laissez faire*, and I believe that individuals can do this thing very much better than the State can do it; because if the State once departs in England (which we can deal with without any of the associations connected with Ireland) from the sound political and economical doctrine of letting individuals make their own bargains, and if one section of the State is to be subsidised when others are not to receive the same subsidy in the conduct of their business, as an individual I think it is a wrong departure, and I hesitate to endorse it, much as I wish to see small holdings increase.

Chairman—continued.

3849. But do you object to the use of the credit of the State for public purposes; for instance, for harbours?—No, they are public purposes, not individual.

3850. You are aware that at the present time the State lends money through local authorities for an immense number of purposes?—Yes.

3851. For sanitary work of all kinds?—Yes.

3852. For public buildings?—Yes.

3853. For harbours?—Yes.

3854. And still more for the creation of artizans' dwellings under the Artizans' Dwellings Improvement Acts?—Yes.

3855. Are not all those precedents?—Yes. All but the last, it seems to me, are perfectly within the reasonable and proper office of Government to afford the means of assisting and carrying out the great duty of general Government control which individuals could not do; but in the case of the artizans' dwellings, much as I honour and respect the promoters and the results, I very much doubt whether the principle ought to be conceded.

3856. But we are dealing now with what you admit to be a public object of great moment?—Yes.

3857. And your evidence has gone to show that if it is left to private enterprise it will not be done?—I think it will.

3858. But as a matter of fact your experience is unfavourable?—At the present moment my experience is unfavourable to it; my experience tends to this: That if 15 years ago the landowning class had been as willing to subdivide and sell their estates as they are after the sharp experience of 1879 to 1889, there would have been a class who would have come forward to have bought those small areas, and to have accepted the opportunities which we are suggesting should be now offered to them, and which I say would be offered in a greater or less degree by almost every client whom I have the honour to represent. The existing condition of deferred hope and depression affects even the land-buyers of a small scale to a certain extent; they are not so sure as they were 15 years ago that farming matters are going well, and may be profitable.

3859. I think, then, I may say that although you are are desirous of multiplying small holdings, you would be afraid to grant exceptional facilities or to introduce the intervention of the State for the purpose?—That would be my conclusion; but do not attach any value to it, because I only speak as an individual.

3860. I think I will not question you about Mr. Collings' proposal, because your argument applies, in effect, to any proposal for lending State credit for this purpose?—It does.

3861. Therefore I need not go into the details of a particular proposal?—Certainly.

3862. Your objection is to the principle?—My objection is solely to the principle, and I cannot tell you how happy I should be if my principles were more elastic, and the experiment resulted successfully.

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

3863. You made some remarks to the effect that the process of consolidation, to which the Right honourable Chairman referred, arose mainly from the increase of produce, attendant upon such consolidation. Is there in your opinion no other way of increasing the produce of the land except by consolidating it into large farms?—Yes, I only spoke of the practice of consolidation as being mainly due to the economy incidental to buildings and maintenance, and more economical working.

3864. Are you satisfied that the progress of agriculture during the last 30 years, say, was due to this process of consolidation?—Very largely due. The increase of stock, the improvement of sheep, the greater production of cereals, wool, beef, mutton, butter, and milk, consequent on that, was something enormous.

3865. But can you imagine that there is any other system by which the same amount of produce could be produced without the consolidation into large farms?—Not without all the attendant circumstances under which those farms were consolidated. The principle of inclosure ranging from 1796 up to 1815 was the first step towards emancipating individuals from the tyranny of the circumstances by which they were bound together, and absolute freedom of action was prevented. In the first instance, the system of enclosure (the common field which had obtained from the earliest time, from the Saxon downward), under which the farmer was bound to farm wheat, barley, and grass was broken down; each man had strips of land, in some cases, not so wide as this room; perhaps 15 or 20 chains long, divided by a little mere as they were called (that is the Saxon word for a boundary), and they were all bound to sow their corn in the same field; they sowed their grass in the same way, and the sheep were on a certain day turned on the lands to feed, and were all turned on the downs at the same time, and came back and folded on the lands in course of wheat-growing. There was no freedom, no elasticity, they could not depart from it. Then the enclosure came and gave the lands in severalty; each man, instead of having 20 allotments of land making 110 acres, had 100 acres given in entirely in one lot, and of course he could manage in better, and as he thought best.

3866. But are you satisfied now that the result of this consolidation has been satisfactory?—No, I have never said so.

3867. Do I understand you to approve of a system by which there should be small tenancies and small holdings now?—I would make the holdings as small as I know how, if I were not called upon to put my hand in my pocket for buildings and such things.

3868. So your objection to making small holdings is the practical one?—It is an economical one.

3869. But if means could be devised by which it could be done without the hand being required to be put in the pocket you would not be against it?—Certainly not; I should be quite content. I may say that I wrote an article for the "Royal Agricultural Journal" for the French Exposition about the year 1882, and in it I dealt with the

Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

question of the proportion of capital supplied by the landlord to that supplied by the tenant in the management of a farm; and I concluded that a proportion (varying of course according to the application of the land) contributed by the landlord in the shape of buildings, fences, water supply, cottages, and roads, was equal to considerably more than one-third of the freehold. The tenant simply provides the money for the actual working of the land.

3870. I desire to ask you a question about Lord Ashbourne's Act. You stated that you had reason to believe that that Act was successful in Ireland; what is your reason for making that statement?—Simply what I see in the public papers; I know nothing more than that; I have not been in Ireland for some 10 years.

3871. You are aware, I presume, that under Lord Ashbourne's Act the first chance at least of buying the farm is given to the actual sitting tenant?—Certainly, as it should be.

3872. But in the case of a scheme such as has been talked of by the Right honourable Chairman, of course that element would not enter?—There would be no sitting tenant to deal with.

3873. You said you objected to subsidising any class of people?—Yes.

3874. At the expense of the general public, I presume?—Not at the expense of the general public; but I object to the principle. I do not know where it would land us.

3875. But there are many ways of subsidising a class with which you must be familiar, without giving them actual money?—Yes; but that legislation ought not to be favourable to one class at the cost of another.

3876. I think it is generally admitted that the land legislation generally has been favourable to one class, otherwise we should not be here to-day; and I think, if you look at the question from an historical point of view, you might be inclined to relax your opinion with regard to the question of subsidy on general principles alone?—No; I am a Liberal, and have always been so; I sucked it in with my mother's milk, and I hope I have not forgotten it; but I am giving you my experience of contact with land and on land during 35 years.

3877. You are aware, doubtless, that the State, at the present moment, advances money to landlords for the cultivation of land on very favourable terms?—Yes, the State advances uncommonly little; private enterprise does it infinitely better than the State, except the State has done it at a cheaper rate.

3878. As a matter of fact, the State has done it at a cheaper rate?—There has been a small sum of money.

3879. But the principle is conceded?—As the fragments come in they are relet again to those gentlemen, who are sharp enough to know that there is money coming in. I am the director of a land improvement company which has in the past, until these bad times came in, operated very largely, and we find that we as individuals, although we are very humble people, can manage quite as well as the Government does.

3880. But you understand that there is a distinction in the case of the proposal before Parliament

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

liament at the present time, between the State and the locality, that the State only intends to give power to the locality to lend money?—Yes, quite so, but the State has to find the money; the *modus operandi* is left of course with the rating authority, but the State has to be the bank.

3881. So that it is not a question of security with you?—I think if I, as a land agent, were called on to advise a loan of 75 per cent. on the security of a holding, I should hesitate, as my reputation as a surveyor would suffer, and a liability to be called upon if I gave an untrustworthy certificate to make good the advance would arise.

Sir *George Campbell.*

3882. I think you said that the small holdings system would not be applicable to the chalk country, but if the best part of the ground was given to small holdings the downs would go back to sheep-walks, would they not?—Yes.

3883. Under the present circumstances might not that be the best thing that could happen?—If you will tell me the range of prices for the next ten years I could hazard a more or less wide solution.

3884. I mean taking the present value of corn, do not you think that the cultivation of the downs has been overdone?—Undoubtedly.

3885. Do not you think that there would also be a considerable advantage in such cases as the downs near Eastbourne, if the somewhat miserable attempt at cultivation were abandoned and the downs restored to the sheep?—Yes. It takes a very long time to restore a down; 50 years before it goes back again to its normal condition as a down. But I would say this: 30 years ago the great agricultural formula was given, "chemistry for the light lands, mechanics for the heavy"; with the result that we have over-ridden chemistry a little too hard, and these lands were broken up under the sanguine expectation that chemistry was to do more for us than it has been able to do.

3886. With regard to the question of these small farms, do I rightly understand you that up to quite recent times the system of common lands was general in the part of the country to which you refer?—Not in recent times. I have said that the greater part of the enclosure took place from 1796 to 1810.

3887. But up to the beginning of the present century were there these common lands?—The great area of enclosure took place after the beginning of this century.

3888. I am not speaking so much of the enclosures in general as the question of common lands?—But the word "enclosure" has a particular significance with us, as representing dealing with common lands and putting them into severalty.

3889. When you spoke of the great improvement in the produce which resulted from turning small farms into large ones, do you refer to these enclosures of common lands, or do you mean that farms of 20, 40, 50, or 60 up to 70 acres were turned into large farms, on which you say there has been thus a great increase of produce?—My answer referred to this: that under the system of enclosure the produce of cereals was increased

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

I should think by at least 30 per cent., and the produce of sheep and wool was increased by nearly 50 per cent.

3890. In your view that that increase was due to the change of tenure, do you attribute that to the change from the very inconvenient tenure of common holdings to a system of individual holding, or was it due to the change from small farms to large farms?—No, not to the change from small farms to large farms; but due to this: that in a farm of 1,000 acres, with all its staff and with all its arrangements, it can be more economically worked, and a larger margin of produce left for the outside public, than would be the case if that farm were divided into ten holdings.

3891. Then you think that in the case of a 70-acre farm, say, employing a pair of horses, the produce per acre of corn is not so large as in the case of a large farm?—I think it may well be as large in such a case as that, as it would be in a large farm; but there would not be the same proportionate increase of production of meat and wool as there would be on the large farm; there would be a larger increase in poultry, in pigs, and matters of that kind probably, but not in the case of cereals.

3892. But do you not think that the advantage in the matter of poultry and vegetables and other things to which you have referred would more than counterbalance the advantages which the large farmer might have in the matter of wool?—It is quite possible that it would be so; but as I have said, the actual product of corn would, I am fairly well satisfied, be more economically arrived at on a large than it would on a small farm.

3893. But as to the general question whether in the case of a 20, 30, or 40 acre farm the produce per acre would be larger or smaller, are you prepared to say that the more economical production from a large farm would more than counterbalance the excess of production of poultry, vegetables, and things of that kind in a small farm?—It would be very difficult to give anything like a precise and reliable answer to that question. You are, of course, referring to the question of actual value.

3894. The value of produce per acre divided over the whole?—I should rather be with you. I should think that relatively the value of the produce would be larger in the small farm than in a large farm, taking into account the increased value of the smaller products which would hardly exist on a large farm.

3895. Then we may take it that that opinion rather applies to the question of enclosure of inconvenient common lands than to the question between small and large farms?—Yes, it would be a modification of my answer in that respect.

3896. Have you any experience of the potato growing country?—Yes, we grow potatoes very considerably in some parts of our district, not in the way they do in Lincolnshire, but we do for our home consumption, but not greatly for exportation.

3897. Would you think that the produce would be larger in a 20-acre field of potatoes or in a quarter acre plot?—In a 20-acre field decidedly. Go into Lincolnshire, not the Isle of Axholme,

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

but take a broad area of the best lands in Lincolnshire where they grow superb potatoes, the crop grown in the fields under the excellent management in that district, is far greater than anything in small plots.

3898. Is that because the management is better or because the land is better?—I am dealing with lands of the same character.

3899. You think the large farms produce more?—Yes, because they are so perfectly done; there is no stint of labour, no stint of capital, and everything is done to make it as perfect as can be.

3900. Are you at all accustomed to the system under which a large farmer lets out to a certain extent some portion of his potato land to tenants, they supplying the manure and he the labour?—Yes; it is invariably given in our county to any labourers who wish it.

3901. Is that a successful plan?—I think it is a successful plan; but I would much rather see a man with a sufficient garden and a good allotment so that he is independent of his master under any circumstances for the obligation of manuring and ploughing.

3902. I think I understand you to say that copyholds had disappeared within the last 30 years?—Copyholds in the sense in which I am speaking of them, that is areas fluctuating from 20 acres up to 250 acres.

3903. They have been disappearing in very recent times?—Yes. I could take you to places where they exist now; at Lord Arundel's estate at Wardour, where there are many cases.

3904. What is the occasion of their disappearing in recent times, during the last 25 or 30 years?—Because the landlords were taught to believe, as the event proved unwisely, that the aggregation of farms would increase the net income of their estates. The buildings as a rule were in a bad condition, many of them having been in existence for 200 or 300 years, and when something or other had to be done the copyholders would not do it.

3905. Why did the copyholders surrender?—They could not help themselves.

3906. Why could they not help themselves?—They were copyholders for lives.

3907. Are not those copyholders people who have a perpetual tenure?—There are two classes of copyholders; the one with the copyhold for lives renewable at the will of the lord, and other copyholds of inheritance absolutely at the will of the tenant.

3908. And the copyholds you speak of are not perpetual holders, not men with permanent rights, but mere tenants?—They have a permanent right incidental to the possession of the land during three lives.

3909. And their disappearance at the will of the tenant, not at the will of the landlord?—Yes, I think so in many cases; the tenant showing a great indisposition to renew, and the copyholders practically becoming the tenants at rack rent.

3910. With regard to the questions you have been asked, comparing the project of lending money in this country with the Ashbourne Act, I suppose if the whole of the value of the land is advanced at a rate far below a mortgage rate of

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

interest, that is, practically, State subsidy?—It is a State subsidy, it seems to me.

3911. And, inasmuch as the interest of money lent upon land is much higher in Ireland than in this country, would it not be the case that money advanced on the same terms in England would be advanced more advantageously to the State in England than in Ireland?—Yes; if I sweep away my principles; I see, of course, that the thing may operate and may be successfully done; but it is that I do not see why one class should have a benefit which is denied to another.

3912. But I say, putting apart the principle, supposing that the State is willing to advance the money, would it not be more advantageous to the State to advance that money in England than in Ireland because the security is better?—The security would be better in England than in Ireland, certainly; but I still think that 75 per cent. is too much.

3913. At the present time it is the case, is it not, that the mortgage value of money lent upon land is much higher in Ireland than it is in England?—Practically, the great source of supply for lending money on mortgage has ceased; the insurance companies will not lend money in Ireland at all; nor will trustees.

3914. If, for economical reasons (putting aside political reasons), the State were satisfied that it was advantageous to lend money in Ireland, it would be still more advantageous to do so in England?—Undoubtedly.

3915. Then, you say that the landlords at present are sufficiently willing to create small holdings?—No, I did not say to create small holdings; what I said was, that they were generally willing to sell their land, and to forego the territorial advantages which presumably attached to land in the past.

3916. Would they be willing to sell small plots of land without regard to interference with the rights of game and amenities of that kind?—Most certainly.

3917. And even without parting with their whole estate?—Certainly.

3918. Do you not think that they would be deterred by fear of poaching?—No.

3919. And the loss of the absolute right of the landlord?—No; they have learned a very sharp lesson.

3920. You do not see your way to any arrangement by which, by some arrangements between landlords and tenants, small farms might be created?—It is a question of the construction of buildings, and homesteads, and roads, and water supply.

3921. I want to know whether you see any way of getting over that difficulty?—Of course if the State, the *deus ex machinâ*, says we will lend you money for the purpose, the thing can be done.

3922. But supposing that the State does not come in, do you see any mode of arrangement by which the parties might come to terms, and legislation might facilitate their coming to terms?—I must put a case to you. We will take a small holding in Surrey, a bare plateau of arable land, say 100 acres. The State says that it cannot lend you any money, and is not going to lend you any money; and the man, therefore, simply deals as an individual with the owner of the property. There

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

There are alternatives open. He says to the owner, "Will you let me this land for a term of 99 years for my own life, on a rent, we will say, for 1 *l.* per acre," and the then lessee exercises his own powers and builds what he likes upon it for the purpose of the economical working of that land; he finds his own water, he is amenable to the sanitary authority about his drainage, and everything of that kind; the landlord is relieved of a grave burden in that direction. That is one course. Another is for him to say to the landlord, "I will take your land if you will erect certain buildings upon it for me." The landlord then considers it; he comes to the company, of which I am a director (at least I hope he would come to it), and says, "I want to borrow 1,000 *l.* to put up buildings on this land," and the Land Commissioners say, "We will pass the works if the yare satisfactory"; and the rate for lending that 1,000 *l.* for a terminable annuity of 25 years would be 6 *l.* 10 *s.* 8 *d.* per cent. That you see alone at once establishes a rent for 25 years of 6 *l.* 10 *s.* 8 *d.*, which would be 70 *l.* a year for buildings alone on that land. The landlord would then be left with a net rental of 30 *l.* a year, supposing his land were worth 1 *l.* an acre.

3923. The only part I will press you about is whether you think there might be any legislation to facilitate any arrangement of that kind, whether by giving the tenant a better right in the buildings he leaves on the land, and a better right to compensation for his improvements, and in other ways of that kind, the bargain between landlord and tenant for the creation of small holdings might be facilitated?—Practically, my experience lies directly in a contrary direction. In England the tenant will not put up any buildings or homesteads, or anything of the kind on his landlord's land. I have had a long experience now of the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and I have never known the clause, under which the tenant asks for permission to put up buildings on his land to be exercised. The landlord is quite ready to do everything that is reasonable and proper in the shape of buildings for his tenant, and in many cases he has lately done a great deal more than is reasonable rather than lose his tenant.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

3924. I should like to ask you one or two questions about the condition of the peasant owners on the edge of the New Forest; did they build their own houses on the land on which they squatted?—They erected their houses or hovels on the land on which they squatted.

3925. And all outbuildings; what outbuildings there are?—Yes.

3926. In what condition are those buildings now?—Very bad as a rule. If they belonged to a client of ours, or if they belonged to any one of the gentlemen whom I have the honour to address, the sanitary authority would be down upon them like a shot, and make them alter it.

3927. Have they power to make them alter it?—Yes; they say, in some cases, That house is not fit for habitation.

3928. You think that if the sanitary authority did its duty they would be able to build better

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

houses?—No, I do not say that at all; I do not think they would; they have not saved money enough to enable them to build better houses. These houses are built of mud invariably, and thatch, they are of an extremely low type, a type which the Land Commissioners would not pass for a moment for improvements. They are of a type which a gentleman would scarcely allow to exist on his estate; he would pull them down.

3929. Is it very seldom that they improve their houses, or build stone house?—I have known them use brick occasionally for repairs, and slight additions, and now and then I see a house built of brick, but so badly built that the rain will drive through it as fast as possible. But the answer to that is that the freeholder, the man who is independent, likes to do what he likes with his own; he puts up with inconvenience as an owner which he would not submit to as a tenant.

3930. Are these peasant owners fairly free from debt?—I think so.

3931. Is that always the case?—No, I do not think it is. Occasionally they mortgage the land; I have known instances of that; they do not save money generally.

3932. Do they sublet their lands?—No.

3933. Never?—Never; I do not remember a case.

3934. What number are there of these peasant owners on the edge of the New Forest and district?—Within the ken of my experience (this is on the north-east edge of the New Forest), I should think that there are about 60 or 70. They rent land of us also on the estate I have referred to, to the extent of about eight and ten acres, and more than that they enclose it themselves, and we let them have it rent free, practically, for two years, and then they pay 5 *s.* or 6 *s.* per acre yearly.

3935. And they are good payers of rent?—Yes, they pay their rent very well.

3936. Are they industrious?—Yes.

3937. And sober?—They like their liquor, and get their fair share of liquor, but still they are very good fellows.

3938. Is there much poverty there?—No; no actual severe crushing poverty; certainly they have plenty of food to eat.

3939. With regard to the small tenant-holders of whom you told us, you said they paid their rent well, and did not expect much expense in the way of improvements?—That is so.

3940. Are they able to pay you as much rent proportionately upon their land as the large farmers do?—They pay more.

3941. Do they pay more rent as apart from the rent of the buildings?—No, I do not think they do; that is the crux of the whole question. If it were not for the question of buildings we could let a lot of the lands I have been referring to; but the cost of buildings is so great that, in the illustration I have given to Sir George Campbell, the interest upon it to the impecunious landowner practically leaves him with scarcely a residuum of rent.

3942. Then do I take it from you that your experience is that these small holdings, together with the expense of buildings, do not pay the

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

owners as well as the large farms, taking them over a certain number of years, depression and good times taken together?—It would be very difficult to give a reliable answer in that direction. One man's buildings on the small holdings may have come into hand in good form of a solid character, and another may be very much worse. They are very unequally used, if I may use the term with regard to accommodation for sheds, and things of that kind; they take what they have got, and the rent is proportioned accordingly.

3943. Do you not find that the expenses of buildings and making permanent improvements are found to be considerably larger when they are done by the landowner than when they are done by, say, a peasant owner who is fairly prosperous?—Because the peasant owner is content with a lower platform of accommodation both for himself, his family, his cattle, and his pigs, than he is if he has got a landlord to look to to make him the improvements.

3944. Would you prefer to have these peasant owners, even with their comparatively bad buildings, or the tenant holders who are less independent, but who have better buildings?—An improving tenant is rather an awful personage when he wants a large quantity of buildings put up to suit his particular fancy. As a land agent, I may say that it is part of the business of a skilled land agent to know how far he may meet the requirements of the tenant which shall be satisfactory, not only to that tenant, but to the A, B, C, and the rest of the alphabet, and not to indulge him with any particular crotchet with regard to this or that.

3945. With regard to the advantage of the improvement of agriculture which has been brought about by large farms, I think we are all willing to admit that; but would you say that the small holders have largely benefited by that; that they are open to new ideas, and ready to take gradually to the better methods of agriculture?—A small holder is just as capable of appreciating advanced means of production as a large one.

3946. And do you think he adopts them fairly?—So far as he is able; but on his small area he cannot adopt those things which are readily enough open to a large holder. Take the Strawson's distributor, for instance, which is to remove from us the curse of the turnip fly. A man with 70 acres cannot go and find 20 *l.* to spend on a Strawson's distributor or on his 70 acres, but a man who has 500 acres would do that directly.

3947. Could you to some extent get over that difficulty by having, as they have in some parts of the country, a peripatetic distributor, as they have peripatetic threshing machines?—Yes; but my experience is that it leads to great jealousies unless there is a very able man at the head who arranges how it is to be used; but, of course, the common sense of the people would ultimately result in that.

3948. Now supposing that we had here in England what they have in other countries to some extent; for instance in Denmark, good agricultural and dairy schools, do not you think that they would be able to some extent to take the place of large farmers as agricultural educators?—A dairy school of course is a most valuable addition. We represent one very large estate in Dorsetshire, Mr. Digby's, Sherborne Castle, where there are 40,000 acres, a very large portion of it applied to dairy purposes, and we have been endeavouring there to establish an association of the farmers for the purpose of bringing into one common focus all milk products, for butter, cheese, or for any other purpose. We were driven into this course by the fact that the great buyer of the milk of that district was cutting us down unduly; the worm turned at last in the shape of Mr. Digby's and other tenants. We proposed to establish this association, he gave us the extra price, and the thing has fallen through; but the suggestion was of some service clearly.

3949. But if we had a good system of agricultural education to enable the small holders to keep abreast of the times, you would not be sorry to see the very large farmers of the present day replaced as much as possible by small holders such as you have described?—Yes; I should be delighted to see as many small holders as can be found, so long as the State is not called in to help them.

3950. With regard to the labourers in the district which you know, do the labourers frequently, or as a rule, become farmers in time?—Not frequently; but the cleverest of them do emerge gradually.

3951. By means of small holdings chiefly; by means of getting a small farm?—That is the general platform through which they emerge from the labouring class into that of farmers. A great many of them have great commercial ability in dealing; that is to say, one man will buy a pig or a cow 10 per cent. cheaper than his neighbour who has less of the faculty, and those instances multiplied enable him by and by to become a farmer.

3952. Do many of the sons of small holders become labourers for a time, and then try to get a small farm again in the district do you know?—No, I should say not. The tendency is that most of the sons of small holders, except one who stays at home to assist in the management, generally go away to some other occupation.

3953. To the towns?—Yes.

3954. Is there any district that you are acquainted with where there are a large class of labourers who are labourers from father to son as it were, generation after generation?—Yes. Since the operation of the Enclosure Act the less cultivated of the men have become simple farm labourer, and for the most part have continued to be farm labourers, and during the recent depression during the past 10 years, the migration of their children into the towns has been something perfectly terrible, Dr. Ogle notwithstanding.

3955. Do you think that that class is quite the saddest feature of country life?—This migration is one of the most depressing features to us who love our country that has occurred in recent years.

3956. Would not you be inclined to modify your *laissez faire* views in order, if possible, to do away with this class?—I say I cannot sacrifice

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

fice the principle, because I believe it is so much better that individuals should make their own contracts, and thus derive those advantages which you are anticipating from small holdings; that they should get them from the operation of purely economic causes, and not through the intervention of the State.

3957. But is not the law of contract rather a distant element for these hereditary labourers; is it not oppressive for these labourers, who go on from generation to generation?—Yes, no doubt; but it is less distant than it was.

3958. I take it that you are very strongly of opinion that everything that can be done reasonably to diminish this class of labourers with no prospect and very little hope should be done?—Yes, certainly.

3959. And you think that one of the most advantageous and special methods of doing it is to increase the small farm, whether they are owned by the occupiers themselves or by the tenant-holder?—Certainly. I am most anxious to secure anything that shall maintain the rural population in the rural districts of the country.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

3960. You gave as the principal reason, as I understand, for the diminution of the class of small holders the land hunger of the capitalist class?—I should hardly call it land hunger; it is that which surrounds land, the amenities and the poetry that surround land, which were the great inducements, of course, to the capitalists to come in and buy. Many of the conditions that attracted them in the past have altered now.

3961. I will not argue it with you, but I should think there is as much poetry in looking upon land, whether it is one's own land or whether it is not; but at any rate you said that buyers were willing to give 50 years' purchase, which is more than economic value of the land?—They were content with 50 years' purchase; that is to say, they bought on the platform of 30 to 35 years' purchase, which is Consol price; but they bought dilapidated estates, so that if they laid out the necessary money in remedying the dilapidations and putting the property in order, the net result to them, unless they exercised extreme hardness and harshness in dealing with their tenants, in most cases ranged from 2 to 3 per cent.

3962. Even down to 2 per cent.?—Yes; I could give you instances of 2 per cent.

3963. And the consequence of that is a diminution of the small holders?—That was the temptation; they could not resist the temptation.

3964. You admit, I understand, that the small holdings are an advantage to the labouring class?—Yes. I would say, in supplement to your question, that I do not think that any large estate is properly managed unless there are varying areas for occupation by the tenants, so as to give the labourer the chance of emerging from the position of a labourer into that of a farmer.

3965. A ladder, in fact, upon which he can rise?—Yes.

3966. You admit that the food value of a small holding is greater than the food value of a large holding in the main?—Yes, I say so.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

3967. I only put that in order to lead up to another question: The improved condition of the people and the increased food value of the land would, I apprehend, lead to the diminution of the poor rates?—Yes; the poor rates have diminished, and they are in process of diminution now.

3968. Would you not, then, think it just for the local authority to run some risk in promoting small holdings if it might save, on the other hand, by a diminished poor rate?—That would be a matter for consideration certainly.

3969. You seem to be very apprehensive of class legislation. In its actual incidence, although the common schools of the country are open to everyone, do you consider the Education Act to be an Act for the benefit of a class?—Yes.

3970. Are you opposed to it?—I do not like taxing people for education; at least I should like to put a large portion of the expenditure for education more equitably than it is borne at the present time.

3971. You think that the incidence of the rate is wrong, but you do not think that the Act itself is wrong?—I would rather have had it done by private effort.

3972. But as a matter of fact, you know that the Legislature has compelled parents to part with their boys, and to send them to school?—Yes.

3973. And by that means the agricultural labourers and men of that class are deprived of the services of their children?—Yes.

3974. If the State has the right to take away the wealth of a class, or the sources of wealth of a class, would it not, even in your view, be fair that it should make some compensation to them?—I do not pretend to statesmanship, of course, and I can only look at the thing from the point of view in which I was educated. I was educated in the economical school of *laissez faire*, and I do not like surrendering my first love.

3975. You also admit that the Enclosure Acts have dispossessed men of land that they once enjoyed?—No. That question requires some consideration; it operates by the selection of the fittest. When an enclosure took place, those who were the most competent, the most able, and the most thrifty, became the farmers, and absorbed the occupations of the weaker and less steady and less competent, and that latter class became then the labourers; the separation between the two classes was patent.

3976. That is to say, that in your judgment, the Enclosure Acts dispossessed the weaker of the labouring classes?—It dispossessed a proportion of the copyholders.

3977. Would you think it unjust that an Act of Parliament should be passed to remedy that disaster?—Pardon me, I do not think that your conclusion is quite right. I do not think that the Act of Parliament for enclosure dispossessed that class; it was simply the action of natural causes.

3978. Through an Act of Parliament?—Through the means of an Act of Parliament for the purpose of increasing the produce of the land.

3979. If the condition of the labouring class would

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

would be improved by small holdings, if the food value of the land would be increased and the poor rates diminished by the people having the land, although the incidence of the Small Holdings Act might be to benefit a certain class, would it not be benefiting a certain class for the service of the entire nation?—I can see that many advantages may arise from increasing the class of people in whose welfare we take so deep an interest.

3980. Then you do not object to Parliament interfering for the general good?—Certainly not. Parliament has to do that and nothing else.

3981. But do you not object to Parliament, I mean interfering by measures which will be promotive of the general good; it is legislation to serve a class that you object to?—Certainly; because in cases of the general good, in dealing with questions of sanitation and in dealing with questions of drainage of towns, water supply, and things of that kind, obviously the whole mass of the population, irrespective of the claims of individuals, are dealt with, and all are benefited by it. An association does that under Government control which could not be done by any one individual. But in the other case it seems to me that by subsidising one class you are opening the door to the other class, asking that they should be subsidised in the same direction.

3982. I am trying to show that the general good will be promoted by the service of a particular class?—I see the line of your argument.

3983. That was my object, to mitigate any opposition that you might have to legislating for a particular class by showing that it was entirely for the general good; and I think you admit that it would be for the general good?—I should hope that, apart from the abstract principle, it would certainly eventuate for the good of the people.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

3984. I think you said that you knew something of Lord Bath's property near Cheddar?—Yes.

3985. There are a large number of small holdings about there, I think?—There are 82 small holdings of between two acres and 70 acres.

3986. That is along the south side of the Mendip Hills?—Yes.

3987. How do those small holders occupy their land; what do they cultivate?—I think by general cultivation, and they go in largely for poultry and things of that kind; but then they have the Mendip Commons, in some cases, at the back.

3988. A good many of these holdings near Cheddar used to be market gardens, I think?—Yes; Axbridge is the great area of market gardens; that lies over on the other side.

3989. I am only asking you the question, because I heard you mention the name of Cheddar, and I know that there are a great number of small holdings in that neighbourhood; do they grow much corn?—Not very much.

3990. And they do not keep cows?—Yes, they keep cows chiefly.

3991. But the small man with five or six acres would not keep cows, would he?—The holdings vary largely, as I have told you, from two acres to 70 acres.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

3992. Is it not the fact that a great many of them used to supply early vegetables, peas, potatoes, and so on, for the London market, and do not do so now?—I think the neighbourhood of Axbridge still continues to supply London, Bristol, and Bath, but I think Cheddar has been knocked out of the market by the Scilly Isles and France.

3993. And the Channel Islands, too?—Yes.

3994. You said, I think, that the small holders had a right to the Mendips?—I believe so.

3995. I wanted to ask you one further question as to the state of the common lands on the Mendips now consequent upon the decrease in the amount of stock?—I am not able to give you any detailed information about that; I know the fact, generally.

3996. I should like to ask you a question about these holdings at Hampworth; you say that they sell their garden produce in Southampton?—Yes.

3997. Then they do compete with the Channel Islands?—It is a very different produce. The Channel Islands produce is for the rich; the produce of Hampworth that goes to Southampton, and is brought to the doors of the consumers, is only the most commonplace vegetables.

3998. In fact, Southampton itself eats them?—Yes.

3999. You spoke of eggs, and poultry, and so on, I think?—Yes; these fellows will buy anything.

4000. With regard to the 60 small holders along the edge of the New Forest, are they a class that you would like to see multiplied?—I wish there were hundreds of them.

4001. I am speaking with regard to the conditions upon which they hold their property, with regard to their houses, and so on; do you think that they are satisfactory?—Applying the principle of *laissez faire*, I do. These people say that they are perfectly happy there, and do not want better houses; they live there and breed up their families, and do very well and in some cases save money.

4002. What do they do if the roof falls in?—Oh, they take care that it shall not.

4003. But they are exceedingly poor, are they not?—They are poor, but they are not poor to that extent. I daresay they would go to the forest and cut two or three fir poles out of the Government plantations and mend their roofs.

4004. In answer to the Right honourable Chairman you said just now that, in your experience, the number of small holdings had decreased; that was over a period, I understood you to say, of 30 years?—Yes.

4005. But during the last five or six years has there not been a turn rather in the opposite direction?—Yes; every landowner would be only too happy to convert his land into small holdings.

4006. And better then that they are doing so, are they not?—Yes, where the land is favourable; but the stumbling-block is the question of the erection of buildings and homesteads.

4007. And making roads, I suppose?—Yes, and the water supply.

4008. You have mentioned the property of Lord

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

Lord Bath, and you say that he has 381 small holdings?—Yes.

4009. Whereabouts is that? — You would know the names of every one of the places if I give you this list (*handing the same to the honourable Member*); it is all on his Lordship's Somersetshire Wiltshire property.

4010. And they are doing very well there, are they?—I think they are doing very well; they pay their rents very well. We audit Lord Bath's accounts, and I see that the accounts of the small farms are better generally than that of the larger ones.

4011. You stated also, with regard to that, that there is no great demand for ownership of small holdings; I want you to draw a distinction between ownership and occupation?—I said that we had found, by the operations of our company, that there were very few people who were able to buy, or were apparently disposed to buy.

4012. What is the difficulty that they told you they had to meet?—I do not know that they told us anything; but the fact is, that we give them all the option to purchase; it is an option which they may exercise now.

4013. Did they ask for any alteration of the terms with regard to the facilities for repayment, and so on?—No; in several cases the offers made by them, either for occupation or with the intention of purchase, were in excess of what we contemplated asking.

4014. In your opinion, would the majority of the men who are anxious to take small holdings prefer to be tenants or owners to start with?—As I have told you, the applications come in practically simply to occupy the land; they do not come to us asking to buy. They have the option, of course, and can exereise that option at any time. After they have become tenants they may come to the secretary and say, "I should like now to pay the increased rate and become owner of my land after a certain number of years." The secretary of the company is good enough to hand me what he says is a common phrase; some of them have said, "We will wait and see how we get on;" that is a very sensible answer.

4015. Have you found from your experience a very strong feeling amongst the labourers to own the land as their own not connected with their labour?—Yes, no doubt.

4016. Does not that lead them often to give higher rents than they ought to give?—The small owner, through force of circumstances and competition, always pays comparatively a larger rent than a larger owner. First of all, that is the natural operation of competition; there are more people competing for the same areas; there are a greater number of them.

4017. In your experience are there many men who have bought a little land, shopkeepers and so forth, who have let it again; who like the idea of being little landlords?—Yes, and they do let it.

4018. What is your idea of them as landlords; do they make the best landlords?—No. If they build houses, as they generally do, those houses are let at 3*s.* 6*d.* a week in our country, as against Lord Pembroke's or Lord Bath's cottages, with five times the amount of convenience and comfort in them, which are let at 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* a week.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

4019. And I suppose that these men do not pay outright for their property?—No, they generally mortgage it.

4020. Therefore, when their rents are due they have to insist upon payment, in order that they shall themselves pay for the money borrowed?—Yes; and the property is almost invariably mortgaged to a large extent. If a man has a couple of hundred pounds he buys something for 500*l.*, and will borrow the other 300*l.*

4021. Consequently the lives of men holding land under these small needy landlords is a harder one?—It is, of course, generally a hard one; but as a rule, in the purely agricultural districts, the cottages and holdings that you are referring to are the exceptions; they are not the rule.

4022. You have studied Mr. Jesse Collings's Bill; would not the position of a tenant be very much the same as a tenant under that Bill, if it were carried out, as the position of a tenant renting under a landlord, who in his turn has to pay regularly for his borrowed money?—That is assuming that an individual buys 10 acres of land for which he pays 500*l.*, that he pays 25 per cent. of the purchase-money, and receives from the Government the other 75 per cent., for which he must pay a rate of interest at 1 per cent. in excess of the rate at which the sum was borrowed by the Treasury, which would represent probably something like 4 per cent. Clearly any tenant under that man would have to pay the amount with exactness to date.

4023. There would be no waiting for the next market or for better times?—No.

4024. In your experience of the difficulties which a man meets with who wishes to purchase a small farm, you spoke of the legislative difficulty, and the difficulties with regard to the conveyance of the land; do you think that that is the great deterrent?—The costs of conveyance for the transfer of land seem to me heavy and unreasonable in proportion to the amount paid.

4025. I am afraid I am going to ask you a question which you may find a difficulty in answering; but what would be the average cost to a man purchasing a piece of ordinary land, say, at 50*l.* an acre; what would he have to find in order to secure a 25-acre piece?—That is a very difficult question to answer.

4026. What would he have to calculate beforehand as to what it would cost?—It would range from 10*l.* or 15*l.* to 25*l.* or 30*l.*

4027. I suppose that is a staggerer for a good many men?—From one point of view, of course. The purchaser says, "I will not give the owner so much for it." From my point of view it is a tax upon the owner rather than upon the purchaser.

4028. And you think that if an alteration were made in the law for the transfer of land that would facilitate the transfer of land, and render it cheaper, it would be a great advantage?—Yes.

4029. And would increase the number of men who would become small holders?—It would be

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

be one of the elements that would operate in dealing.

4030. Do you think that it would bring about a great change in the number of holders of land?—It would be one of the factors in the result.

4031. It would be one of the chief factors, would it not?—It would be one of the factors, undoubtedly; although I still think that the costs of transfer bear much more hardly upon the vendor than they do upon the purchaser.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

4032. In your answers to the Right honourable Chairman you referred to the fact that, during the last 25 years or so, the number of homesteads or cottages had been diminishing, did you not?—No; I hardly said that. I said that the operation of the inclosures was to degrade many of the houses from being farmhouses into the occupation of the labourers. The number of homesteads have diminished certainly, because one of the large factors resulting from inclosure was the disposition of the landlord to put up new and economical buildings in the proper places, instead of repairing the old buildings, which were usually attached to these small copyholds and houses.

4033. On the estates with which you are acquainted has the number of labourers' cottages diminished?—No; it has increased.

4034. In spite of the action of the sanitary authority to which you have referred?—They have increased, because the landowners have invariably built cottages. If they have taken down one cottage, they have almost invariably built two.

4035. And that is your experience over the counties you are acquainted with?—Yes.

4036. You referred to Lord Mostyn's estate in Wales, I think?—Yes; as an illustration of the system of land-butchering, as it is termed; that is what it was currently called.

4037. In that case the estate was purchased by a capitalist?—Yes.

4038. And it was afterwards cut up and sold in small portions?—Yes.

4039. The consequence was that the purchasers of small portions probably had to pay more than they would have done if they had combined together to purchase the estate originally?—I have heard, I do not know it, that the purchaser of that estate made something like 10,000 *l.* profit out of buying wholesale and selling retail.

4040. What size was the estate?—I do not know.

4041. Do you not think that it would be much more equitable if, on the sale of an estate like that those men who were holders on the estate, and to whose labour, partly, the value of the land is due, had the right of pre-emption?—Yes; but there is another side of the shield. I have known men buy estates with the intention to cut them up into small lots, who have lost a good deal of money by them.

4042. That does not interfere with the equitable right of the tenant who has improved the property to have the right to purchase?—

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

Clearly not, assuming that he had improved the property; but the improvement of the property by the tenant, I think, with all deference, is much more ideal than real, as a rule.

4043. In some cases no doubt it may be so?—It has happened no doubt.

4044. You spoke of a derelict estate in Wiltshire, a large tract of land in Wiltshire which the Right honourable Chairman mentioned as being derelict and uncultivated. I want to know what were the difficulties in the cultivation of that land?—There were no difficulties at all; it was extremely useful land; it was simply due to misunderstandings.

4045. It was not let simply from misunderstandings?—Yes.

4046. There was no objection to letting it in small portions?—I do not think the effort was made.

4047. There was no opportunity given to people to get small holdings?—I do not know; I was not connected with the management of the estate; and I should say it was rather through a series of misunderstandings that the position of matters assumed so undesirable and unhappy a form as it did.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

4048. You do not much favour schemes of legislation for stimulating the extension of small holdings, but you would consider, would you not, that for want of something of that sort the extension of the system is rather at a standstill?—It is somewhat at a standstill, but yet it is going on. We have recently, within the last six months, sold some properties in Devonshire, and we are about to sell some in Somersetshire, where we have divided it into quite small lots, and have had very successful results.

4049. Do you know what led to that state of things?—The desire of the landowner in that case to pay off charges on his estate which were bearing 4 per cent. interest; and we sold these properties to pay about 2½ per cent., about 40 years' purchase. The temptation was large.

4050. And the owner regarded the small holdings as more profitable than large ones?—He did not look at it as a question of small holdings; it was simply a question of price with him.

4051. But you yourself have nothing to suggest in the way of removing obstacles except cheapening the cost of sale, and removing the restrictions such as primogeniture?—I do not remember where primogeniture has operated in more than two cases in the whole of my experience; it is very easily avoided. I quite agree that it ought to be removed; but it is not that, it is the system of settlement and entail which have been the obstacles; and the cost of the transfer of land that grows out of settlement and entail.

4052. But while you object to any schemes for stimulating the extension of small holdings you would admit, would you not, that the extension of the system, which you recognisee as advantageous, makes very slow progress?—It makes slow

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

slow progress; but I have ventured to suggest that the slowness of the progress in degree is due to the reflected uncertainties and depression which exists amongst all classes in connection with land. The feeling of gloom is by no means confined to landowners and large occupying tenant farmers, but is reflected in a more or less degree throughout every class.

4053. And you think from your experience that the comparative profitableness of small holdings, as compared with large ones, does not go to meet that?—"Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and if it were not for that we should never get land cultivated at all A new generation arises, which is filled with hope and with the belief of their ability to exercise that most natural of their abilities, to cultivate land; and the dealing with land is an extremely pleasant business, everyone likes it; and that contributes, of course, to very moderate profits, which throughout all time have arisen on land.

Mr. *Lowther.*

4054. We may take it generally from you that the success, or want of success, of small holdings must depend upon the character of the soil on which those small holdings are situated?—Hardly the success or want of success; but I venture to say that the character of the soil, and the general surroundings adapt themselves to the application of the land; that is, that there are certain districts like those I have suggested, of Lord Bath's for instance, which apply themselves at once to small holdings; whereas there are other districts which are as antagonistic to their application in that direction.

4055. To use the common phrase now-a-days, the character of the soil is an important factor in determining whether or not small holdings would or would not be a success?—Undoubtedly. The fact is that the character of the soil determines the size of occupations throughout the length and breadth of the land.

4056. And also the particular circumstances of the locality?—Certainly; that has a great influence again.

4057. Is it possible to arrive at any particular acreage, and to say that that amount of acreage is sufficient to support a man and his family?—I should say certainly not; it must depend upon the circumstances and the man himself, and upon 50 other considerations which an individual is only able to judge of.

4058. I understand you to say that the costs of the transfer of land at present in your opinion is a tax on the vendor rather than the purchaser?—Yes.

4059. If that is so, how does it operate to prevent small holders from purchasing?—I do not know that it does; except that there is a constant delay and worry; and the purchaser wishes to know what he has to pay to his lawyer for the transfer and conveyance of land; but in buying that land he has taken into account that there would be these troubles and delay and expense; and therefore he gives less for the freehold because of the expenses incidental to its transfer.

Mr. *Lowther*—continued.

4060. Then if the cost of transfer were diminished, the land would fetch a higher price?—Yes; the land would fetch a higher price. If you were buying 100 acres of land for 10,000 *l.*, and you were told that it would be simply handed over to you by one sheet of parchment, with the seal attached to it, you would be much more pleased to give the 10,100 *l.* which might be stipulated for by the vendor, than you would if you knew that you were going to encounter trouble, delay, and 200 *l.* or 300 *l.* expense in getting it, probably.

4061. Therefore it is rather the delay in the transfer than the cost, which is the obstacle in the way of small holders purchasing?—It operates in both directions; it is very difficult to say. For instance, in these properties in Devonshire and Somersetshire that I spoke of, we made the purchasers pay the auctioneer's fee, and a fee for the contract; a moderate fee of two or three guineas, or something of that kind; and the purchaser buys, knowing that he has to pay, and he pays it willingly, because it is part of the contract that he has to do so. Whether he takes it into account, and deducts that two or three guineas from the price of his purchase, I am not prepared to say; but the higgling in the market settles all that.

4062. You referred a short time ago to the fact that the small holdings could produce poultry and pigs, and vegetables, with greater success than the large holdings; how is that?—Simply from experience. I have known several attempts to farm poultry largely; great undertakings, capital subscribed, the best men appointed to look after it; all resulting, so far as I know, in failures, except in one case where there were special circumstances to modify it in the selection of choice breeds of poultry.

4063. What has been the cause of the failures there?—The expenses ate up the profits.

4064. But why do they fail when tried on a big scale, and succeed on the smaller scale?—I cannot tell you, but they do fail. There has been only one case that I know of where a moderate profit resulted. I do not know how much profit has resulted; but that business is still going on. But I have known several others started which have resulted in failure. And the small holder makes his profit in those directions, because his wife and children look after the poultry, which is not paid for, as it is in the case of a large establishment.

4065. Then, if you were to reckon the labour of the wife and children as part of the expense of management in that case, you do not think the small holding would succeed where the large one fails?—I do not think there would be any profit attaching to the management of poultry as there is now. Of course it would be one of the expenses incidental to the management.

4066. And I suppose that the same applies to the other matters, the pigs and vegetables, you referred to?—Certainly.

4067. You were describing a little time ago the methods which are open to a landowner to get rid of his land, for the small holders to be-

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Mr. *Lowther*—continued.

come tenants; would it be possible for him to let the land on a long lease, leaving the tenants the power, if they chose to exercise it, of putting buildings on the land, a lease, say of 99 years?—That would be quite possible; but the chances are that any landowner, any right-minded landowner, would be extremely dissatisfied with the class of buildings that the tenants would put up there.

4068. But still that would not matter to him?—It would not matter to him, except as a matter of sentiment. If he lives surrounded by things that are objectionable, of course his happiness is proportionately diminished.

4069. But his happiness might be proportionately increased by his rents coming in?—Yes, quite so; supposing you found a man who would be willing to spend his money in putting up his buildings.

4070. That is the point I was coming to; if such terms were offered, are they such as, in your experience, men would accept?—They would accept them to a certain extent; but you would not find a great number of men who would accept them, because they have not the means to put up their buildings and build their house.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

4071. I understand the result of your evidence is, that you are greatly in favour of the extension of small holdings, I mean of the principle?—Certainly.

4072. But as a political economist you are against any interference of the State?—Certainly.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

4073. I daresay, like some more of us, if somebody would do it; if a Committee of the House of Commons would step out from the strict lines of political economy, you would not look upon it with any great disfavour?—No.

4074. You would be very glad if you saw your way to breaking through tradition?—I should be very glad to see the creation of a million small holdings in England.

4075. And you would not be so very careful about strict rules of political economy if somebody would break them for you, that is what I mean?—Every man's conscience is to himself.

Chairman.

4076. Is there anything else you would wish to say?—Yes. The secretary of the Small Farms Company asked me to put before you a remark which you made when you said in referring to the Small Farms Company, that our terms were too high to obtain tenants.

4077. No, I do not think I said that; I meant to obtain purchasers?—Yes. We have no difficulty in obtaining tenants.

4078. Certainly; if I said so it was a mistake; my understanding was that the tenants came at once and in such numbers that the company have hardly found it necessary or possible to test the question whether owners would come forward?—We have always given the preference to owners where it was possible; we give them the option. If the men will come to buy, we treat with them rather than with tenants.

Mr. PRICE HUGHES, is called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

4079. WHERE do you live?—At Towyn, Merioneth.

4080. Were you brought up as an agriculturist?—I was brought up on a farm.

4081. What is your present occupation?—I am rate collector, I am surveyor of taxes, I am road surveyor, I am clerk to the school board of the district, I am a land agent in a small way, and many other things.

4082. You have had opportunities of observing the condition and wants of the agricultural population in your part of Wales?—Yes, I have.

4083. What have you to say as to the facilities at present existing for the creation of small holdings in the Principality?—There are none, so far as I know.

4084. Are there any impediments in the way?—Many.

4085. Will you name some of them?—The indisposition of landlords to break up their estates; the delay and the cost of transfer when estates are broken up; and the difficulties of borrowing money at a lower rate of interest for the purpose, are some of the difficulties.

4086. For what purpose?—For purchasing small estates.

4087. Dealing with those in their order, do you find in Wales an indisposition of owners to divide their estates?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

4088. Do you know the reason for that?—Not exactly, unless it is what is commonly called land pride.

4089. Is that not rather disappearing now?—To a certain extent it is disappearing.

4090. Are not landlords generally more ready than they were to establish small holdings?—There is a disposition that way, but very little practical effect is given to it.

4091. You think there is still a difficulty in obtaining land where a demand for land for small holdings exists?—There is.

4092. Then the delay and the cost of transfer are, in your opinion, serious obstacles?—They are.

4093. Have you any suggestions to remove them or lessen these objections?—I cannot suggest anything. I can only say that it would be very desirable to remove them.

4094. And then your third difficulty was the high rate of interest at which money could be borrowed by the purchaser?—Yes.

4095. Have you any idea what the purchaser would have to pay for interest?—When land is affected by settlements or entailed, money can be borrowed and repaid within 25 years at the rate of interest and repayment of capital at something like 6 *l.* 12 *s.* 4 *d.*

4096. But that is for improving, is it not?—Well,

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Chairman—continued.

Well, that will be for the erection and renewal of buildings.

4097. Buildings and drainage?—Yes.

4098. But what you told us just now was that the difficulty the purchaser had was in borrowing money, I understand, to pay for the purchase?—There are no public facilities for it at all, so far as I know, only by private mortgage.

4099. Is there any difficulty in borrowing a fair proportion of the purchase-money?—It is difficult to get money for less than 3½ per cent.

4100. Do you think 3½ per cent is a high rate?—I do, with a liability of the money being called up with only six months' notice, and the cost of transfer or mortgage.

4101. Do you propose that the State should interfere then to lend money at the rate of less than 3½ for the improvements of land?—I do not propose it. I should think it would be very desirable for the State to lend money at the lowest possible rate of interest without incurring any loss.

4102. Are you aware that, as a matter of fact, the rate at which the State has lent money is calculated with the object of preventing the State from losing money?—Yes.

4103. And is based upon the experience of the past, so far as possible?—Yes.

4104. Have you any reason to suppose that if the State lent money at a lower rate than it has done it would be able to do so without making a loss?—Money is lent for some purposes at 3¾, which I understand is one per cent. higher than Consols.

4105. But in those cases there is a certain amount of risk attaching to a loan which has to be provided against in the rate of interest. If you were lending money yourself you would ask a higher rate if the security was bad than when the security was good, would you not?—I would not lend money at all when the security was bad.

4106. But do you think that money lent on improvements in land would be what you would call a first-class security?—Yes; provided no more than two-thirds of the value of the land is advanced upon the land.

4107. Private persons have not been accustomed to lend money on mortgage of land for less than 3½ per cent., have they?—I do not know of any.

4108. Do not you think that private persons are pretty good judges in such a matter?—Yes, they are.

4109. And if the State were to come into competition with private persons, and to do the business cheaper, do not you think that very probably the State would lose money?—My own idea would be that it would not be desirable to advance money for the creation of small holdings at a loss.

4110. You would put it as one of the first conditions, would you not, that the advance should be made on terms which would make the State or the local authority perfectly safe?—Yes.

4111. And you would not wish that the State should incur the risk of loss?—No, nor make a big profit.

Chairman—continued.

4112. Then if you found that experience showed that money could not be advanced for these purposes at less than 3½ per cent. you would not wish the State to attempt to do so?—Unless the land could be purchased at such a rate as to enable the occupier to pay that interest, and get the benefit of it.

4113. But I say if experience shows that 3½ per cent as the lowest sum at which money can be advanced on these conditions, you would not wish the State to run the risk of loss by advancing it at a lower rate?—I do not think you quite understand me. If land can be bought at such a price as to enable the occupier to pay that rate, I would certainly recommend the State to advance the money.

4114. But it is not a question of buying the land, it is a question of the proportion of the purchase-money, and the ability of the purchaser to pay the instalments afterwards?—Pardon me, I think it bears directly upon it. If a man pays 400 *l.* for what is worth only 300 *l.*, and he borrows 300 *l.* to pay for it, he borrows the whole money.

4115. But it is the condition of all loans by the State, whether in Ireland or this country, that the State shall, through its servants, satisfy itself that a fair price has been paid for the land?—I suppose it is so.

4116. Then a fair price having been paid for the land, if the State finds that it cannot advance more than a certain proportion at anything below a certain rate, you would not wish them to make exceptions in the case of small holdings?—I would not wish the State to lose money, that is my position.

4117. Do you suggest that the State should lend money in order to enable persons to purchase land?—Yes, that would be one of my suggestions.

4118. Then do you also suggest that the State should lend money to landlords in order that they may make the alterations necessary to transfer large estates into small holdings?—Yes.

4119. You think that one difficulty in the way of the subdivision of estates is the inability of the owners to find the money necessary for this purpose?—I do.

4120. They cannot find the money for putting buildings on, I suppose?—No.

4120*. Nor perhaps for making the roads and fences that would become necessary in such a subdivision?—Those are the difficulties.

4121. And you would wish the State to lend this money for that purpose?—Yes.

4122. But always on such terms that the State should not make any loss?—Yes. This is what I had in my mind. I know of many small properties settled where the tenants for life are unable to deal with them, which are in a very bad condition. What I mean is, that some facilities should be given to those people to improve their properties.

4123. But are not facilities given now to those people to improve their properties; can they not borrow now on certain terms? There are various Acts of Parliament for lending money to landowners for the improvement of their property?—There

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Chairman—continued.

—There are; but I consider that, for the erection of buildings, and planting and draining of land, the cost is too great.

4124. But I put it to you; I ask you whether you know, as a matter of fact, whether at this rate there has been any large profit made out of the transaction?—I do not know.

4125. And if there has not been a large profit made out of the transaction, how could any one afford to do it for less?—I think it would be quite possible, in the first instance, to reduce the initial charges which are very high in these cases.

4126. You mean charges for the transfer of land?—No, for advancing money.

4127. The charges incidental to a loan, you mean?—Yes.

4128. But that would not make a very great difference, would it?—It would make a very considerable difference.

4129. Over the whole period of the loan?—Yes.

4130. For instance, if you wanted to borrow 1,000 *l.*, what do you suppose the initial charges would be?—I give you a case in point. I had to borrow 340 *l.*, and the initial charges were 46 *l.*, and the whole has to be repaid in 25 years.

4131. The 46 *l.* had to be added to the loan?—Yes.

4132. Do you know what the charges were incurred for?—I could enumerate them to you as they stand.

4133. From whom did you borrow the money?—The Land Commissioners. The Commissioners' charges are five per cent, 16 *l.* 19 *s.* 1 *d.*; office charges, 1 *l.* 13 *s.* 11 *d.*

4134. Is that the office of the Commissioners?—Yes. Tracings and plans and copies of specification, 11 *s.* 6 *d.* Land Commissioners' inspectors, 7 *l.* 1 *s.* 6 *d.* Fee for Provisional Order, 2 *l.* Stamp for rent-charge, 11 *s.* Registration of rent-charge under the Rent Charges Registration Act, 1888, 1 *l.* 1 *s.* Total, 29 *l.* 18 *s.*; Architect's fee, 16 *l.* 10 *s.* Total, 46 *l.* 8 *s.*

4135. Was the architect employed for the Land Commissioners?—No; the landlord had the option of choosing the architect; but the Land Commissioners had to approve of the plans prepared by the architect.

4136. But in any case where a man puts up a building he has to employ an architect unless he is foolish enough to be his own?—Yes, most certainly.

4137. You could not reduce that charge in any case; that is part of the ordinary cost of a building, is it not?—Yes, it is.

4138. You do not call that charge incidental to the loan; it is a charge incidental to the building?—As a rule those charges are very much higher when plans and specifications have to be submitted to such people as Commissioners.

4139. In this case the charge is only five per cent.?—Yes.

4140. And that is the usual charge?—Yes. But my point is this that the initial charges of 49 *l.* 8 *s.* are exorbitant.

4141. I put it to you that a large portion of that is not a charge incidental to the loan?—£. 29 18 *s.* I suppose you would consider so.

4142. Yes, I think you might consider that so. You consider at all events that the cost of making these loans is a serious obstacle to their being taken up by landlords for the purpose of creating small holdings?—I do.

4143. And I think you have told us that you consider that there is a difficulty in getting land; do you consider compulsory powers necessary in order to obtain land?—I do not think it would be possible to create small holdings without obtaining compulsory powers.

4144. You mean compelling landlords to sell for that purpose?—Yes.

4145. What size do you consider the small holdings should be?—Not less than 50 acres of fairly good land.

4146. Are there not a great many of such holdings in Wales already?—There are a large number of them in the district I am acquainted with.

4147. The proportion of small holdings in Wales is much greater than in England, is it not?—I think it is greater.

4148. Could you give us any particulars of your district in regard to that?—Yes.

4149. In the first place, what is the size of the district that you are talking of?—The extent of it is 22,554 acres.

4150. What number of small holdings are there in it?—One hundred and seven.

4151. Can you subdivide them, and classify them?—There are 64 under 50 *l.* gross estimated rental of the poor rate, 30 not exceeding 70 *l.*, and 13 over 70 *l.* and not exceeding 100 *l.*

4152. So far as your experience goes, have these holdings of this description increased or diminished?—They have diminished.

4153. During what time are you speaking of?—I am speaking over a period of 60 years.

4154. Have you any returns as to the number of such holdings, say at the beginning of the century?—I have had access to books showing what the number of holdings was in 1820 and 1827; and they were about double the number.

4155. And to what cause do you attribute the diminution?—To the desire of landowners to form big estates, and to the desire of big farmers to acquire big farms; to make their farms bigger.

4156. Are the holdings you have been telling us about their tenancies?—Yes.

4157. Are there many freeholds?—Not very many.

4158. Chiefly small holdings?—They vary in size.

4159. Do you find the desire of the people is for small tenancies or for small freeholds?—For both.

4160. Has there been any multiplication of these small holdings to compensate for the diminution which is due to the consolidation in large farms?—No.

4161. Why is that?—The land cannot be had.

4162. If the land were offered, do you think there would be purchasers for it?—I think so.

4163. Do

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Chairman—continued.

4163. Do you know anything about the production of these small farms as compared with the larger farms?—Yes, from observation.

4164. What is your opinion upon that point?—That the small farmers acre for acre produce a greater and better quantity than the larger ones.

4165. What is the reason of that, what advantage have they over the large farms?—All the people engaged on the small farms have a beneficial interest; that is not the case on the big farms, where so much hired labour has to be employed.

4166. That applies both to the tenancies and to the freehold, does it?—Yes.

4167. It applies in fact to those cases where the farmer and his family do the work themselves?—That is so.

4168. And you think, so far as your experience goes, that the chief difficulty is the supply of land?—Yes, that is my opinion.

4169. That if land were offered there would not be serious difficulty in finding the money for the purchase; there would be people who would find the money for the purchase?—I think it would be possible even to find money for the purchase.

4170. But you would accompany any provision of land with facilities for getting money for the purchase?—Certainly.

4171. Have you thought what proportion of the money you could safely lend to an intending purchaser?—I do not think that I would lend more than 75 per cent. under any circumstances.

4172. You would make him find one-fourth?—Yes.

4173. Do you consider that he ought to be charged for that three-fourths such a sum as would make him the absolute freeholder in a term of years, or would you prefer that he should pay continuously a fixed rent?—I think it would be more in accordance with the notions of the Welsh people to have the absolute freehold.

4174. You think that they would not be satisfied to continue permanently to pay the local authority upon a mortgage or loan to the extent of three-fourths of the purchase money?—According I think to the prevailing notion in Wales, they would prefer having the absolute freehold. I do not give it as my opinion that that would be better for them.

4175. Would you prefer to keep a hold over them by means of such a quit-rent?—I think I would.

4176. Taking such a holding as you have spoken of of 50 acres, what would it be worth, what would be a fair price for that?—According to the quality of the land.

4177. But according to the quality of the land must be the size of a farm to subsist a family?—Yes.

4178. Taking the case of 25 acres as sufficient for a family to get a living out of, what would be the value of that?—The holder would be able to pay from 30*s.* to 35*s.* an acre, provided he could be supplied with his buildings to start with.

4179. That is the tenant?—Yes.

4180. Would the value of the land be about between 40*l.* to 50*l.* an acre?—Something about that.

Chairman—continued.

4181. Then the owner of such a farm would want to find 2,000*l.* for 50 acres?—Yes, it would be so.

4182. Then he would have to find 500*l.* somewhere, according to your view; that is one-fourth?—Yes.

4183. Are there many agricultural labourers in Wales who could find 500*l.* for such a purpose?—Not many agricultural labourers.

4184. What class of people would they be whom you would put into these holdings?—The present small holders.

4185. Then if you put them in it would not be creating handling small holdings, because it would be only transferring a man from one farm to another?—No. It is my view that there should be facilities for purchasing and for letting small holdings. I am very anxious that facilities should be given to the labourer to become a farmer.

4186. But I am taking the case of a labourer who, at the present time, is not a farmer, and whom you and we, if we can, want to make a farmer?—Yes.

4187. Such a man, if he wanted a small holding, would have to get 50 acres before he could live upon it?—Yes.

4188. I point out to you that would cost him 2,000*l.*, of which the State might, according to your proposal, lend him 1,500*l.*, but still he would have to find 500*l.*?—But would you make no provision to let the labourer take it with a yearly rent, with the option of purchase if he could?

4189. You think it would not be possible for him, or for that class to buy land under such conditions?—It would be quite impossible.

4190. Then how would you propose about letting. In the first place, who is to buy the land?—The local authority.

4191. The local authority is to buy land of this kind in order to let it to the labourer?—Yes.

4192. Why cannot the labourer now get it from the landlord without the intervention of the local authority?—Because there is none to be had. The present farms are all occupied, and the demand for them is greater than the supply.

4193. That is to say, that the demand for small farms is greater than the supply?—Yes.

4194, Then your object would be to introduce the local authority in order, so far as possible, to subdivide some of the large farms?—Certainly.

4195. According to your view there are no small farms, or not sufficient in the market, for the persons who want to take them?—No.

4196. Would the people who want to take them give a higher rent or a higher rent for the farms?—They would give a higher rent.

4197. Would not the landlords prefer to receive them as tenants?—Then would come the cost of erecting buildings upon the small holdings.

4198. Then you would expect the local authority to erect the buildings?—Certainly, or they could not be erected; you could not have a greater number of buildings than there are now if some means were not found.

4199. Do you think that when a landlord

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Chairman—continued.

erects buildings he ever gets a profitable return upon them?—In some cases.

4200. If a landlord had a farm, say of a thousand acres, and was to cut it up into farms of 50 acres and put up the buildings himself, and let them as small farms, do you think that that would be a profitable transaction for him?—Yes, I do.

4201. Then how is it that these landlords, who, I suppose, look pretty sharply after their own interests in Wales, as elsewhere, do they not——?—Pretty well.

4202. How is it that they do not carry out this profitable transaction?—Because there are so many of them who are unable to deal with their own.

4203. The difficulty, in your opinion, is wholly caused by the settlement and entails, and by the absence of money on the part of the landowners who enjoy the estates?—To a very large extent that is my opinion.

4204. You have told us that the diminution in the number of small holdings is largely due to the consolidation of farms; is it due to any extent to enclosures?—Not since 1818; I think no enclosure has taken place in my district since then.

4205. But previously to that time were there any enclosures?—Yes.

4206. And what was the general effect of those enclosures upon the question of small holdings?—The general effect was to diminish the number.

4207. How do enclosures operate to reduce the number of small holdings in any district?—In this way: the small holders lived in the villages, and when the lands were enclosed they were added to the farms.

4208. And did the commoners, the people who had rights over these lands, get any compensation?—None.

4209. They got no land allotted to them?—None.

4210. They did not become owners or small tenants themselves?—Not of any land.

4211. The whole of the land was enclosed and added to existing farms, or made into large farms?—It was added to existing estates.

4212. But that cause has not affected the question since 1818, you say?—Not since that time.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

4213. You say that it would be profitable to divide the larger estates into small holdings and put up the buildings, I think I understood you to say so?—I did say so.

4214. What is there in any settlement or entail or anything of that kind to prevent a landlord from doing that?—I apprehend that the landlord cannot borrow money for the purpose; he cannot charge the land with the repayment of it.

4215. Not from the Land Commissioners?—Yes; but I have stated that I consider that the terms of the Land Commissioners are too high.

4216. Yes, I understood you to say so; but can he borrow money elsewhere than from the Land Commissioners at a cheaper rate?—I think so.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

4217. As a matter of fact, do you know that?—That is my opinion. I think I could put up efficient building at a very much cheaper rate.

4218. Borrowing the money at a cheaper rate, do you mean?—Yes.

4219. One of the reasons of the expense of these buildings is that the Land Commissioners insist upon having buildings of a particular class?—Yes.

4220. And as has been already pointed out by the Right honourable Chairman, you have included in the cost of the Land Commissioners the charge for the architect, which is a usual charge?—Yes, but I consider that even that may be very materially reduced.

4221. That may be; but the only reason that you can give why the landlord does not deal with his land in this way is that he cannot go to a cheaper place than to these public companies to borrow money for the purpose of entering upon what you say is a profitable way of dealing with his lands?—Just so; when the landlord feels so disposed.

4222. There is no other reason. I am not advocating settlements and all that sort of thing, do not misunderstand me; but there is no other reason that you can suggest beside that he would have to pay at a higher rate to one of these companies in order to put the proper buildings on the land?—There is not any other reason that I know of.

4223. To what size do the farms generally run in the district of which you have been speaking?—I have just enumerated them.

4224. I have got those down, those are the smaller ones; I am speaking of the larger ones?—They differ very materially in extent. I have a whole schedule here which it would be very interesting for you to hear the names of.

4225. I want you, if you will, to tell me generally what is the average size of a farm?—The difficulty is that there is no average about it. I know one farm that is let for 18 *l.*, which is 145 acres, and I know another that is let, of 18 acres, for 60 *l.*

4226. What is the ordinary size of a Welsh farm: I am not asking anything about the rent; do they run to 200 acres or 500 acres?—They run up to 500 acres. I do not think we have any bigger in our district.

4227. If you are going to destroy, I may say, without using the word in an offensive sense, of course, a farm which is already equipped with buildings, you will have to pull a good many of them down before you begin to cut the land up; on a 500-acre farm you would have a large homestead and buildings, would you not?—In dealing with a farm of that extent, possibly 200 acres of that farm would be mountain, which I would not make into more than one holding.

4228. And it would depend entirely upon the nature of the land then as to what size you would make these small holdings?—Yes.

4229. Some land being much more adapted for the purpose than other land?—Yes.

4230. Is there a great demand for land in Wales at the present time in your district?—There is a great demand for small farms.

4231. I mean is there a great demand for the farms

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Mr. *Compton Lawrance*—continued.

farms that are there already, are they well occupied?—The small farms are well occupied.

4232. And the other farms, the bigger ones?—They are not so well occupied.

4233. Is there any land on hand?—No, there is no land on hand; there is no land unlet.

4234. These small holders, you say, did exist once, and have decreased in number; did they decrease at all on account of one small holder taking another holding and adding it to his original holding?—Yes, by adding several together.

4235. And that is a system that soon comes in, is it?—Yes, that has been the case.

4236. It is rather difficult to prevent it; it is a sign of a man getting on well, that he has done well on a small quantity of land, and wants more; but the effect is to decrease the number of small holdings?—Yes.

4237. It does not always mean, if I may put my question quite plainly, that this land has been taken away from small holdings and put into big farms?—Not always; many of them have been added together.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

4238. You say that many of these small farms have been made into large farms by being added together?—Yes.

4239. How would you prevent the possibility of that happening again, in the case of these small holdings being established in the way that you propose?—You could not prevent it unless you placed the power in the hands of the local authority to prevent it.

4240. But supposing that the local authority found it expedient to sell one of these holdings, how could you prevent the occupier of the piece adjoining buying it, supposing the local authority wished to sell it?—You could not prevent it unless you made it preventable by law.

4241. Supposing that a man bought a piece, and saw an opportunity of buying another piece, how would you prevent it?—You could not prevent it unless the local authority declined to sell it.

4242. But the local authority could not decline if it had to sell it in order to repay itself?—No.

4243. Then do you not think that there would be a possibility under this system, of having to go over the same work again, and re-distribute the land?—I do not think so. I think that the system would work.

4244. You did not give a direct answer, such as I think the honourable Member wanted, and I want too, to the question, what is the average size of a Welsh farm in the district that you speak of; do you think that the average size of a holding is about 50 acres or a little more?—That would be my idea of a model small holding.

4245. At the present moment, what is the average size of a holding that you have experience of in the neighbourhood of which you are speaking; what is the average size of a farm?—They run from everything; there is no average about them. Here is before me now, the case of a farm

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

the gross estimated rental of which is 40 *l.*, and the extent of it 268 acres.

4246. And part of that is mountain land?—Yes.

4247. Putting aside those farms which are mainly made up of mountain land, what should you say is the average holding of cultivated land; would it be about 60 acres?—No. I should say from 40 to 50 acres, exclusive of the mountain land.

4248. But then this mountain land would not be of any use if it were not for the holding in the valley?—Yes, it would.

4249. For what purpose?—For sheep.

4250. But they do not keep sheep there all the winter?—No, but they send them out as tack sheep in winter.

4251. But those tracts of land on the tops of the mountains are not of any value to a farmer to hold all the year round?—They would be very much better worked with some land on the bottom, on the flat.

4252. Then I think you have arrived at what I wanted to get at; that the average size of the holding about there is between 50 and 60 acres?—Yes.

4253. Are not those what you would call small holdings now?—Yes.

4254. Then what alteration would you propose for the benefit of the neighbourhood generally, and of the inhabitants in that part of the country?—I would create a larger number of those holdings.

4255. How could you?—Because we have farms reaching to 500 acres.

4256. Would you split those up?—Yes.

4257. Are there many of them?—Yes; very many between 100 and 300 acres.

4258. Then you think that anything above 60 or 70 acres it would be wise to split up?—I think the produce would be better, and the population of the rural districts would be increased by so doing.

4259. And you would prevent by law any man from holding any more than what you yourself arrived at as being the proper amount?—Unless you did that you would have to begin again as you are doing now.

4260. But so far as I make out, if you do that you would have the work to do all over again. You have been speaking of your district; may I ask what your district is?—I call it my district because it is comprised in the urban sanitary authority of Towyn.

4261. You spoke of several thousand acres?—Yes.

4262. Is it all one urban sanitary authority?—Yes.

4263. Not a rural sanitary authority?—No.

4264. Then have you 23,000 acres under the urban sanitary authority?—Yes.

4265. Is it comprised in one union?—Yes.

4266. What is the name of that union?—Machynlleth.

4267. Are you surveyor to that district?—Yes.

4268. That has given you the opportunity of judging

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

judging as to the wants of the neighbourhood?—I know every occupier of it personally.

4269. You say that you would approve of the State lending money to the landlords to put their property in a fit state to sell to the local authority, or to the small holders of the district?—I think I would give them both facilities.

4270. Would you give facilities for the landlords to make such alterations in their estates as would fit those estates to be cut up into small holdings?—Yes.

4271. What security would you have from the landlords when they had parted with their land?—The ordinary security; the same as you have now.

4272. What is that?—By advancing only so much of the money.

4273. Would you advance so much as would enable them to do that?—Yes, the 75 per cent.

4274. You would advance that for the purpose of their selling the property?—Oh, no.

4275. That is what I understood you to say in answer to the Right honourable Chairman?—I did not mean to say so anyhow.

4276. Then was I wrong in supposing that you would approve of the State lending money to landlords to put their property in a fit state to sell?—No; I would give landlords facilities for renovating their present buildings, and, if necessary, for erecting buildings in order to create small holdings.

4277. Those facilities would really be money?—Yes.

4278. Then you would approve of the State lending money to landlords to assist them in getting rid of their holdings?—I do not put it that way.

4279. But I do; do you approve of that proposal?—I do not. I would not lend a man money to make the land more profitable and dearer, and more difficult for the occupier to pay for it.

4280. Under what circumstances would you compel a man to give up his farm in order that it might be cut up into two or three holdings; for what reason would you assign it to other men?—In this way. There is a great tendency in the district I am speaking of on the part of labourers to leave the cottages and go and reside in the villages and the small towns.

4281. And you would give that as a reason to the farmer when you gave him notice, acting on behalf of your own sanitary authority, that you wished to have his farm because somebody else wanted it?—Yes; but I would certainly allow him to have a portion of it.

4282. But who should decide what portion, he or you?—I suppose some authority. Some scheme would be prepared by some assessor, who would have to satisfy the authority by reasons that it would be necessary to acquire the land for the purpose.

4283. But supposing that the authority who had the power to deprive a man of his land came to the conclusion that he should turn out, and somebody else should turn in, do you think that that would be sufficient reason for a man to quietly give up his farm?—I do not suppose that the authority would ever turn a man out of his occupation for any frivolous reason without having good and valid reasons for doing it.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

4284. But you told me just now that it would be sufficient reason to ask him to turn out because somebody else wanted to turn in?—I do not think I did.

4285. I understood you to say so; if not one, at least two or three?—I put it in this way: I think the Right honourable Chairman asked me, say, that there is a farm of 1,000 acres to be cut up into 20 holdings of 50 acres each, that is assuming that the land is good land, and I said that I would do so.

4286. And I think to make the case clearer you said that you would deprive a moderate-sized holder of say 100 acres of his holding, in order to put in four others of 25 acres?—No, I do not think so.

4287. I will not press you further. I thought I understood you sufficiently to base my question upon it?—I did not mean to say so if I said it.

4288. Then you would be averse to a man being disturbed who held a farm of 100 acres in order to put in four others of 25 acres each?—Yes, I think that a farm of 100 acres should not be disturbed.

4289. Supposing that a man occupied 200 acres, would you be inclined to turn him out if four others wanted 50 acres?—I would not turn him out; but if it was perfectly apparent that for State purposes, and for the good of the community at large it would be better to take some of his land, I would take it.

4290. By compulsion?—Yes.

4291. But the State reason you told me just now was that others wanted it, and the local authority thought it would be for the benefit of those men that they should have it?—I do not think I put it in that way. I do not think I would simply do it to gratify the desire of holding land.

4292. No, I understand you to mean for the benefit of them; that if the local authority thought it was for the benefit of the community, or of the neighbourhood, that four men should occupy 50 acres a-piece, you would by compulsion turn out a man who occupied a farm of 200 acres?—I would not turn him out; I would let him have 50 acres of it.

4293. You would turn him out of 150 acres?—Yes.

Sir *Walter Foster*.

4294. What wages do the agricultural labourers get in your part of the district?—A good man hired all the year round and provided with board and lodgings, gets from 25 *l.* to 30 *l.* a year.

4295. That is as a single man living in the farm-house?—Yes.

4296. What do married men living out get all the year round?—They get about 12 *s.* in winter, which runs to an average of 18 *s.* during summer.

4297. Of course it depends upon the length of time the 18 *s.* goes on?—Yes.

4298. It does not go on for very long, I suppose, only a few weeks?—It would go on three months, I take it.

4299. Have

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

4299. Have these men any land, these agricultural labourers, who are getting from 12 *s.* to 18 *s.* a week?—Very few of them.

4300. You suggested that these small holdings should be about 50 acres a piece?—That is what I consider a small holding,

4301. You would not be able to put a labourer earning from 12 *s.* to 18 *s.* a week on a small holding of 50 acres, would you?—Very often they find their way to such holdings; and some of the best farmers that we have in our neighbourhood now have been labourers.

4302. Would you not have any small holdings under 50 acres?—I would have allotments; and we have a large number of them now.

4303. Would you not have small holdings of 10, 15, and 20 acres, and up to 50 acres?—I consider a holding to be of a bit of land with buildings on it, and I do not think it would pay to put up buildings on a small holding of 10 acres.

4304. That is the difficulty?—Yes; but of allotments we have about 90.

4305. But supposing the men were living in the villages it would help these men to rise to a holding of 50 acres if they could first of all obtain one of 10 or 15 or 20 acres?—Yes.

4306. Then when you put a man on a holding of 50 acres, of which we will say the value is 2,000 *l.*, you propose that he should pay 500 *l.* down, a fourth, and the other three-fourths should remain as a permanent charge, do not you think that he would be crippled a good deal by the payment?—Yes, no doubt; he must not enter as a freeholder until he has the money.

4307. Would you prefer that he should enter as a leaseholder in perpetuity, or as a small holder?—I am not prepared to answer the question; I think I have put it before in this way that the general desire in Wales is for the freeholders.

4308. You said on the other hand that while the desire on the part of people is to become freeholders, yet it may be necessary for national or local purposes that the local authority should have the power of resuming the land for public purposes?—Yes.

4309. Therefore, looking at it from that point of view it is necessary to have some scheme by which the local authority can resume possession; under those circumstances would you prefer these people being perpetual leaseholders at a rental going on always, or put them under the scheme of having to pay one-fourth down?—I think it would be better for them to be perpetual leaseholders, as you put it. I do not think it would be so much in accordance with their wishes; that is the way I look at it.

4310. Supposing there were a scheme of this kind; supposing you have a fixed rental, say for a period of 40 years, or 49 years if you like, as it is under Lord Ashbourne's Act, at the end of which time they become freeholders subject to a quit-rent of 5 *s.* a year per acre, do you think that that would meet the desires of the people?—I dare say it would.

4311. Better than a perpetual rental of 1 *l.* a year?—I think it would; it would be a nearer approach to being a freeholder.

4312. And the small quit-rent would in that respect be preferable to a larger quit-rent calculated on three-fourths of the value?—I think it would be more in accordance with the present desire of the people down in my part of the country.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4313. Is it not the fact that farmers who have only land amounting to 25 acres can fare pretty well as long as they have their share of the commons and mountain; are there not many farms in Wales of 25 acres where they are doing pretty well where they have a sheep walk?—There are men that have such facilities in addition.

4314. Under this system of consolidation, not merely did the large farmers get the land of three or four, or five small holders, but they get the share of the mountain as well?—Yes, certainly, everything that belonged to the small holding, so that by now four small sheepwalks are formed into one.

4315. So that the population was elbowed out of the cultivated land in the valley, and out of its share of the common in the mountain?—Certainly.

4316. With regard to the question that the honourable Member asked you about disturbing the present large farmers in case the local authority see fit to create a larger number of small holdings; do not you think that the changes in the tenancy are quite frequent enough without disturbing an actual sitting tenant in these large farms?—Hardly.

4317. Would you not say that many of these farmers along the Dysyni Valley change their tenancies often enough for the local authority to intervene at the end of one tenancy and say, we desire to give facilities here for four or five small holdings?—I can conceive circumstances under which it would be better to give them the option of taking the land which they then consider fit.

4318. Do you consider that with regard to the present number of small holders who are comparatively so numerous in Wales, the reform you desire with regard to them is to facilitate the purchase of their small farms?—I think it would be desirable.

4319. Do you think it would be better for their position as citizens, that they would be more independent, and that they would cultivate the land better?—I think so.

4320. And you think that although the desire of the people is stronger for absolute freehold, you think they would prefer to have their holdings under perfect security at a greater rent even, to the present insecurity of their tenure to some extent?—Most certainly.

4321. I think the Right honourable Chairman pressed you a good deal with regard to the purchase-money of these small farms; is it not the fact within your experience that your estates or parts of estates have been in the market of late years, the cultivating tenant, who is very anxious to obtain the freehold of his land, has to compete against those who buy the land for fancy purposes, and not for cultivating purposes?—Yes.

4322. And that has been one of the great difficulties in Wales during the last few years?—That

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

—That has been a very great obstacle on the part of the tenant farmer becoming a freeholder.

4323. Do you know some cases where the capitalists or strangers buy the land for these fancy purposes, and then when once they have got the land, they expect to have some commercial interest in the land?—Yes, I know some instances; they are not numerous in my district.

4324. But still there are some?—Yes.

4325. Would you not in that case think that it was a practicable reform, even if we cannot get the advantages of this Bill, that in dealing with such cases the cultivating small tenant should have the first chance to buy the holding that he has improved?—I certainly consider that he ought to be compensated for all the improvements he has effected upon the holding.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

4326. You have been asked with regard to the aggregation of small holdings, and I understood honourable Members to suggest in their questions that there is no way of preventing the aggregation of these small holdings. Would it not be possible for the local authority to make it a condition that no land should be sublet, and that the tenancies should always remain of the size which they were when first granted to the small holder?—I think that would be very desirable.

4327. Then you see no reason why this eating up of the small holdings should continue?—I do not.

4328. From your experience of local authorities you feel that such arrangements would satisfy the local opinion?—To a very large extent I do.

4329. You said in reply to the Right honourable Chairman, that a man can live on 50 acres of fairly good land?—Yes.

4330. What do you mean by living; what would be the value of the produce per acre on these 50 acres of land, so far as you know?—I want to explain it in this way: My evidence goes from intimate knowledge of farms of that extent. A farm of 50 acres is big enough for a man to keep a team of horses of his own, say, two horses, and perhaps four to six milking cows; he is able to employ his team labour upon the farm when it is essentially necessary to do so. While in the case of small holdings, which have to hire team labour, it is difficult to obtain team labour at the proper time. Other farmers are busy with their own land, and I know farms of that extent worked successfully; the people living comfortably, and paying their way; having stood the agricultural depression better than any other class of farmers.

4331. I will tell you what my object is, so that you will be better able to understand my question: You have been asked what is the prevailing rate of wage, and you have said that 50 acres of land a man can live on?—Yes.

4332. I am trying to obtain a comparison between the condition of an agricultural labourer and the condition of a holder of 50 acres?—Yes.

4333. When you say that upon 50 acres of fairly good land a man could live, I want to know what you mean by living; in how much a better position is he than an agricultural labourer?—I think he is in a much better position, socially and economically.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

4334. What would be the value of the produce per acre?—That depends a great deal upon the position of the farm.

4335. But in this particular class of farm to which you refer of 50 acres of fairly good land that a man can live upon?—It would produce wheat and barley equal to that of any big farm, I mean acre for acre; it would produce better milk and better butter. A tenant farmer, when he was not very busy, would generally find means to earn money by means of his horses, haulage of different descriptions; his wife and his children would probably take the produce of the farm direct to the market and dispose of it.

4336. Are you able to give any figures of the gross value of the produce, and the net annual value of the farm?—I have not.

4337. Have you arrived at any general estimate of the net value per acre of the 50-acre farm; would a man have, for instance, 1 *l.* or 30 *s.* an acre in coin and kind to spend upon himself out of 50 acres, that is to say, 30 *s.* a week?—I should think so.

4338. Would you rather yourself (if I may put it that way) have the net result of a 50-acre farm than 35 *s.* as an agricultural labourer?—Yes.

4339. You consider the position of the small farmer is twice as good as that of the agricultural labourer?—Yes.

4340. You have been asked questions with reference to loss which the estate or the local authority might possibly have to endure; do you consider that the small holding system would improve the condition of the population?—I think it would increase the population of the rural parts of the country, and improve their position.

4341. Do you think that it would have the effect of diminishing the poor rates?—No doubt it would.

4342. Then you think that any incidental loss which might accrue to letting the lands in small holdings, or granting the land in small holdings, would be more than off-set by the saving in the poor rate?—No doubt there would be a saving in that way, an indirect saving; at the same time I am not able to see my way clear to advance the money for the creation of small holdings at a direct loss; but there would be a saving in the way you mention.

4343. But you think that the small holdings could be established without loss?—I think so.

4344. And that if there were a small loss there would be an offset in the saving in the poor rates?—No doubt it would tend to decrease the poor rates.

4345. And the men would be materially in a better condition?—Yes.

4346. And in a better condition of health and strength, and better able to render service to the State?—Yes; and a great point would be, that you would induce the best class of men to remain on the land where they now take other employment.

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Friday, 24th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Broadhurst.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Chaplin.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Viscount Curzon.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. A. C. HUMPHREYS OWEN, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

4347. I THINK you are Chairman of the County Council, and Deputy Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of Montgomeryshire?—Yes.

4348. You are a landowner, I believe?—Yes.

4349. Will you state to the Committee what your property is?—I have about 3,000 acres of ordinary mixed agricultural land, with some little wood and plantation on the north-east side of the county, and another block of land, roughly speaking, of 3,000 acres, the greater part of which is sheep-walk; about 1,400 of it ordinary farming land, and the rest is sheep-walk.

4350. How is this property divided as regards tenancy?—They are small holdings; comparatively small; the largest farm I have is 220 acres (I mean exclusive of sheep-walk), and then they go down by various decrements. I have got three of between 100 and 150 acres; eight between 150 and 100, and 14 between 100 and 50 acres; seven between 50 and 20; and the remaining are holdings of from 23 acres down to a few perches.

4351. May I ask how far is that property from a market; what is the nearest market?—The Berriew part, which is the ordinary agricultural part, is about five to six miles from Welshpool, which is a small market town, and the terminus in that direction of the North Western and Great Western Railway Company. The other block is about five or 10 miles from a small market town called Llandidloes, on the route between North and South Wales.

4352. What is the quality of the land?—It varies a good deal; the best land I have is in the Valley of the Severn; and some of it has fetched as much as 2 *l.* an acre. It varies from that to practically nothing on the hills.

4353. Now with regard to these holdings, I suppose that some of them are large enough for the tenants to get their whole subsistence from them?—Yes.

4354. To what extent of land does that apply?—My view is that for ordinary farming, when a man has to live by arable and stock farming

Chairman—continued.

wholly, he ought to have enough land to pay for keeping two good horses; and that I put down in my experience at not less than 50 *l.* a year rental.

4355. Which might or might not be accompanied with a sheep-walk or hill land?—I should deal in an altogether different way with hill land. I am speaking now of land all enclosed, some under cultivation, and the rest being meadow and permanent pasture.

4356. What do you say about the hill land?—With regard to hill land my knowledge is not quite so intimate, but I have sent out a paper containing questions to several members of the County Council, and to other friends of mine whom I knew would be able to give me information, and I gather from their answers that a smaller value of land than I mentioned with regard to ordinary farm land, would suffice to keep a family comfortably in the hill districts. I said about 50 *l.* a year rent would represent the holding in the case of ordinary agricultural land; but the result of what I have been told as to the hill districts is, that holdings which are worth to rent from 15 *l.* to 25 *l.* are sufficient to keep families there.

4357. That would be a very important element, would it not, in connection with Wales, where there is so much hill land?—Yes.

4358. Your opinion is that on this comparatively poor hill land the quantity of land represented by a rent of from 15 *l.* to 20 *l.* would be sufficient to keep a family?—Yes, but only on a very modest scale of living.

4359. Some of your holdings I believe are below the level of which you have spoken?—Yes, a considerable number.

4360. In that case how do the people get their subsistence?—They have various other occupations, of which I will give the Committee one or two instances. I have instances here of a butcher, a shoemaker, a lime-burner, a man who owns a drill and goes out with it to do drilling for the adjoining larger farmers, a foreman of roads, a woodman, a grocer, a mason, a

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Chairman—continued.

miller, a blacksmith, a gardener, and several labourers.

4361. Are you in favour of small holdings?—Yes, certainly.

4362. What advantage do you consider that they offer?—In the first place I believe they offer both a moral and a material advantage in giving the holder of a small holding a greater interest in the cultivation of the land, and raising him in that respect in the social scale; and they bring out his intelligence and increase his self respect.

4363. Do you find then that the class of small holders is a good one?—I should say so, certainly.

4364. Do you think that they are superior to the ordinary class of hired labourers?—We have so very few of the regular class of hired labourers in our part of the country that I do not like to make any sweeping assertion about them; but certainly the small occupiers whom I have in my mind seem to me to be a very far superior class to that class which is described as the hired agricultural labourer of the Midland and Southern English counties.

4365. Do these small holdings offer an opportunity for the labourers to get on to the land?—Yes, very great.

4366. Do you find that they progress from small holdings to larger holdings?—Yes. I have one instance at the moment of a man who, I believe, began as a labourer; he came to me from a small holding, and he has now got a two-horse farm, and if things go well with him, I have no doubt he will become before he dies a well-to-do farmer.

4367. What do you say with regard to the production of these small holders as contrasted with that of the larger farmers?—I do not like to dogmatize about that, because I know it is a question that there has been a great deal of controversy upon. All I can say is that they certainly work their land very well, and that they produce a considerable amount of miscellaneous products, such as poultry, eggs, vegetables, and the like, and they are able to pay a quite adequate rent without apparently being at all reduced to any discomfort, comparing their standard of living with that of other men in the same position of life.

4368. Do you find that they pay a higher rent than the larger farmers, in proportion to the land they occupy?—Yes, they do.

4369. Therefore the existence of small holders is a good thing for the landlords?—If he has not to provide the buildings that would be so; but if he has got to do that, it reduces the return below that from large farms.

4370. Independently of any advantage to the labourer himself, and to the landowner, do you consider that the existence of this class of small holders is a national advantage?—Yes, I am quite sure of that.

4371. Has there been to your knowledge any reduction in the number of small holdings in your part of the country?—Yes, there has.

4372. At what period did that reduction take place?—That has taken place within the last thirty or forty years. The maximum population

Chairman—continued.

of the county was in 1841; it rose by steady increments up to that period, and since then it has been decreasing.

4373. At the present time, has the tendency to diminution stopped?—I think it has; at any rate there is no marked tendency to diminution.

4374. What were the causes of the previous reduction?—In the first place, I think a good number of the cottages on small holdings were built in a very inadequate way, and when they got out of repair it was more costly to repair them than to simply let them tumble down, and add the land to the adjoining farms. That related to land held under landlords. Then the smaller owners were a good deal hit by the agricultural depression, and also by the decay of the small local industries, and they had to sell in most cases, and they sold to the adjoining larger landowners.

4375. The persons of whom you have hitherto spoken are tenants; are there many small owners in your part of the country?—No, very few. The figures for Montgomeryshire in the Agricultural Returns for 1887, are occupiers who own 344, and occupiers who rent and own 65, while the occupiers who rent in the county are 5,058.

4376. Is the tendency to a diminution in the number of owners as contrasted with tenants?—I should think not now. I know of cases in which the larger landowners have sold off out-lying portions; and those have not been bought by large owners to throw into large estates, but they have been bought by small owners not always for occupation, but as an investment by small capitalists.

4377. Dealing first with the owners, do you consider that there is a demand for small holdings?—Yes, there is.

4378. The supply, I gather, is not equal to the demand?—No.

4379. If facilities were offered for the acquisition by purchase on reasonable terms, do you think they would be availed of?—Yes, I think they would.

4380. Would the people, who would become the cultivators, prefer to be owners, or would they prefer to be tenants?—I think a good deal would depend upon the relations which they had with their landlord at the time being, I think there are probably some estates on which the tenant, if he were asked, would say that he would just as soon go on as he is at present.

4381. You do not think, as I understand, that there is a strong craving on the part of these people to become owners; the sentiment does not weigh with them you think?—I would not like to answer that question very confidently; certainly I do not think that there is a universal craving of the kind you describe; but there is some wish to own their own farms.

4382. The probability is that under any system a man would have to pay more per annum in order to become owner of his land than if he were to be simply a tenant?—Yes.

4383. Do you think that the majority of people would be willing to pay this additional sum if, as the result, they became owners after some 40

or

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Chairman—continued.

or 50 years?—I think the class I have in my mind have had the notion of becoming owners of their land so seldom presented to their minds, that they really have not thought very much about it, but I should contemplate it as being quite possible that if such transactions take place, and they become more familiar with the notion, men would wish to become freeholders instead of being tenants.

4384. I gather that you yourself would think it was desirable to make them owners if possible?—Yes.

4385. At present however you consider that their ambition is limited to becoming tenants for the most part?—I would rather say that they do not generalize quite in that way. What they want is to get hold of a bit of land off which they can make a living, or if they have got a bit already they almost invariably want to get a bit more.

4386. If there was a larger supply of rentable land in small holdings, do you think that it would rapidly be taken up?—I certainly think it would.

4387. There is an undoubted demand, you think, for small holdings to rent?—Yes, a very keen demand indeed.

4388. Now, in cultivating these small farms, is there any difficulty or disadvantage at which a small owner is placed as compared with a large one?—I think it differs in different parts of the country; I think that the small owner on the English side of my county who attempts to cultivate without having two good horses and adequate equipment and implements, is, to some extent, at a disadvantage. One of them said to me not very long ago, "I am always under my neighbours' feet," meaning that he was constantly under obligation to his neighbours, which he did not like. But on the other hand, on the more Welsh side of the county, and indeed almost everywhere, if a man is on good terms with his neighbour, he gets so much help from him, and there is so much interchange of services and hiring of implements, that I do not think there is any disadvantage.

4389. As a rule are they fairly provided with the necessary machinery?—Yes.

4390. I think you have an illustration of some form of co-operation in machinery which you can give us?—Yes, there are two in our neighbourhood, each of whom has a steam threshing-machine, which goes about from farm to farm, and it is the regular custom for the occupier of one farm to take it on to another, and so on. This tenant of my own of whom I have already spoken, owns a large corn-drill, and he goes about hiring it out to the farmers who are not large farmers enough to make it worth their while to keep one. When a new tenant comes in it is quite a recognised custom of the county that he gets all the help he possibly can from his neighbours, and they will always help one another in harvest; for instance, one man whose crops are more forward than his neighbour gets help from his neighbour, and in return he goes and helps those who are more backward.

4391. Is there any complaint of the insecurity of tenancy on the part of these small holders?—

Chairman—continued.

I think there is some complaint; but it is not nearly so acute in the district I am personally acquainted with as I hear it from other parts of North Wales.

4392. Of course it depends upon the landlord?—Yes, upon the relations between landlord and tenant. I think that the relations between landlord and tenant in Montgomeryshire are fortunately much less strained than they are in some of the north Welsh counties.

4393. I think you told us that you forwarded a series of questions to members of the County Council in regard to this subject?—Yes.

4394. Would you like to tell us anything about the answers you have received?—I should be very glad if the Committee would allow me to give one or two of their answers.

4395. Before reading any particular answer, you will perhaps tell us what the general result of the answers is?—The general result is that the small owners are said to be better off, and their condition more satisfactory, unless they are weighed down by mortgages. There is a universal consensus of opinion to the latter effect.

4396. Are they, as a rule, or in many cases burdened by mortgage?—They are in some cases. There are several cases in Montgomeryshire in which landowners sold off the outlying portions of their land, which were bought by tenants during the period of high prices about 10 or 15 years ago; those tenants mortgaged to complete their purchases; and I hear from several of my correspondents that those purchasers are very badly off.

4397. I may ask you at this point if anything were done to give increased facilities for creating small owners, have you considered whether it would be desirable to limit the right of mortgage in any way?—Yes, I think it would be desirable; but at the same time I really do not know how it is to be managed. If a man wants to borrow, and another man wants to lend it is extremely difficult to prevent the transaction taking place. The risk appears to me to be this, that if you do prohibit it, or give an insecure title to the lender, it only results in the borrower having to pay a higher interest.

4398. What do your correspondents say as to the number of proprietors?—They all of them say that the number is small. There seems to be a few in each parish, two, three, four, five, and so on up to a dozen, and 20 in some cases.

4399. As to the diminution of small holdings in recent times, have they reported anything?—They account for that by the reasons I have already given, and also by the decrease in the local industries and in mining.

4400. They would confirm your evidence generally with regard to that?—Yes.

4401. Did you ask any questions with regard to waste land at present uncultivated which could be used for such purposes as we are dealing with?—Yes.

4402. What answers did you receive?—That general tone of the answers depends, I think, upon who the correspondent is. I find that the large farmers are rather reluctant to acknowledge that any land could be usefully taken from the sheep-walks, and either cultivated or planted.

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Chairman—continued.

4403. Do you find that the large farmers are jealous of the small holders?—I do not say that they are jealous of the small holders, but they are very reluctant to give up any land that they have got. If this would be a convenient occasion, I would read what one of these farmers says upon that subject.

4404. Will you kindly do so?—This is what he says, "There are doubtless many plots of ground on the hill sides which would pay the landlords to plant; but to do this would be very detrimental to the tenants as it would spoil many sheep-walks and deprive them of the facilities of rearing sheep which is the best paying part of their stock. To the farmer the only redeeming point of planting would be that the trees 10 or 12 years hence would offer good shelter for the stock. But this could not compensate him for the loss which he would otherwise suffer." But in connection with that I should like to read another answer which came, not from a farmer but from a very experienced land agent, who is also an owner of land.

4405. The answer you have just read appears to be directed, not to taking the sheep-walks for small cultivation, but for planting?—Yes, for planting.

4406. That is rather a different thing, and I am afraid it is outside our inquiry; we are dealing solely with the question of how far further facilities should be given for the creation of small holdings; we have nothing to do with the disposal of land otherwise then it bears upon the question of small holdings?—Quite so. I think there are no very strong expressions of opinion among these answers; I have one answer here upon this subject, which I could give the Committee if they would allow me. One of my correspondents, who is not a farmer, writing from the hill district says, "There is a large quantity of this kind of land in the district which would pay for bringing into cultivation, and to divide into allotments"; by allotments I take it that he means small holdings.

4407. Are there any other answers which you would wish to read to the Committee?—I do not think there are any that bear very distinctly upon that point. Here is one from the same farmer, whose answer I read just now, about sheep-walks. He says, "On the other hand, to supplement our present system by that of peasant proprietorship would be beneficial. Many a hill-side, and fertile nook and corner would then be brought under cultivation which are now neglected by the large farmer, because plenty of other and better land requires his attention."

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4408. Is that written by a man who is a large farmer himself?—Yes.

Chairman.

4409. Have you anything further that you wish to say about the answers from the correspondents?—There is just one point with regard to the size of the holdings that I should like to touch upon; nearly all of my correspondents answer as to that; and the general result of their answers is, that the annual value which they set down varies from 15 *l.* up to 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* a year; I find that the lower estimate comes from the men in the hill districts, and the higher estimate from those in the valleys where the land is cultivated on what I may call the English system.

Chairman—continued.

4410. Now has your attention been directed to the evidence taken by the Richmond Commission?—Yes; I have read a good deal of it.

4411. Did they devote any attention to the question in Wales?—Not very seriously. Mr. Doyle, who gave a good deal of evidence, seems to have held a brief against peasant proprietorship, and gave a good deal of vigorous evidence against it; but he had very little, if any, first-hand evidence to give in regard to Wales; and I do not think he at all understood the condition of the people.

4412. Mr. Doyle was a Sub-Commissioner, was he not?—Yes.

4413. I gather that you consider that the evidence taken before that Commissioner very inadequately represents the state of things in Wales?—Yes.

4414. What is the effect of small cultivation upon pauperism?—I think that it improves the standard of living. To take an instance in our own union at our annual revision of out-door relief last year, we had only about 100 altogether of permanent out-door paupers; and of those I think there were only 27 males altogether, the rest were bed-ridden or nearly bed-ridden old women, or widows. The men who were on the out-door relief list, were all either very old or cripples.

4415. Now do you think that the small farmers have passed through the agricultural depression more successfully than the large ones?—Does your question apply to small holders or owners?

4416. To both; I will say small cultivators?—Yes, I think on the whole they have. But then I need not say that the term "small" and "large" are ambiguous. I regard Montgomeryshire as a whole as being a county of small holdings; but certainly the very small men who have had subsidiary industries, and the men on the hills have suffered less, I should say, than the larger farmers in the more strictly arable and pastoral parts of the flat country, in the valleys.

4417. Have you any returns of the produce or of the income from these small holdings?—I have got some returns which my agent made out for me from two small tenants of mine, which show what they actually do make out of their holdings.

4418. I have one of those cases before me, which we will call the case of A. B.; what is the area of the holding?—That is five acres, with a run of about nine acres of wood. The wood is uninclosed, and his stock are allowed to graze in it.

4419. What stock does he keep?—Two cows, four ewes, a sow, and a lot of fowls.

4420. What balance does he show after paying rent, taxes, poor rates, and his general expenditure?—On my agent's figures he shows a balance of 29 *l.* 13 *s.* 9 *d.*

4421. Does that include anything he has consumed himself; has he charged himself with any of

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Chairman—continued.

of his own consumption?—No, I do not think that he has.

4422. Whatever of his own produce he has used for his own family he would have in addition to that?—Yes.

4423. This is the case of a man who adds to his income by doing other work, as I understand?—Yes.

4424. Perhaps you would like to put in that balance-sheet, and also the balance-sheet in the second case, which we will call C. D.?—Yes, I will do so (*handing in the same*, vide *Appendix*).

4425. In this second case, the case of C. D., what is the acreage?—The acreage there is about 15 acres, nearly all grass.

4426. What stock has this man?—He has three cows, two yearlings, one sow, and some poultry.

4427. What results does he show?—His result shows a balance of 16 *l.* 5 *s.*

4428. Then he does not do so well as the man with the smaller acreage?—No; but he does not include in that the milk and butter to the house, which he puts down roughly at 10 *l.*, which brings it up to 26 *l.* 5 *s.*

4429. Do you think these are fair representations of similar holdings in your district?—Yes, I think they are. Might I add with regard to Mr. Doyle's evidence that in his Report on English Counties to the Duke of Richmond's Commission, he gives a somewhat similar balance sheet from a man named Jonathan Crook, and he admits that Jonathan Crook did extremely well, and he goes on to say that all small holders are not Jonathan Crooks; but I should say that in our district most small holders would be Jonathan Crooks, that is to say, they would be able to get on as well as the example which Mr. Doyle gives.

4430. Now, summarising your evidence, I understand that your experience has been extremely favourable as to these small holdings as regards their practical working?—Yes.

4431. You find that the men do fairly well?—Yes.

4432. And that they are a very industrious, useful, and valuable class of the population?—Yes.

4433. At the same time you say that the demand for such holdings is not adequately supplied at the present time?—Yes.

4434. Would you be in favour, then, of artificially stimulating the creation of small holdings by legislation, or by some other means?—Yes; I should not like to say "artificially stimulating;" I would rather put it in this way; that from causes that the Committee are inquiring into, there is far too much aggregation of land in a few hands, and consolidation of holdings; and the evil is one of sufficient magnitude to induce the Legislature to take whatever may be prudent steps to put an end to it.

4435. You think that there is a national interest at stake which would justify the interference of the Legislature?—Yes.

4436. Have you considered in what way the Legislature can intervene?—I have not considered that with very great minuteness, not in the same way as if I were expressly concerned in the matter as being responsible for a Bill, dealing with it; but in a general way I think it should take the form of loans at as easy a rate as the Treasury can afford to grant to men who are in a position to buy their holdings, the loans being repayable by terminable annuities.

Chairman—continued.

4437. I understand you to say that the great obstacle at the present time in the way of the division of larger holdings into smaller holdings is the want of buildings?—Yes.

4438. Have you any proposal to make which would facilitate the erection of buildings on existing properties?—No; I think it would be hardly advisable to ask Parliament to give loans to large landowners, if that is what your question means. I think that I should rather pause before I gave a privilege of that kind to a class who ought to be able to take care of themselves.

4439. But, as a matter of fact, are they not often either unable or unwilling (probably unable for the most part) to find the expenditure necessary to put up the buildings where an estate might otherwise be divided?—Yes, the mischief of it is this, that so much land is in the hands of limited owners, and a limited owner is obliged, if he puts up a building in the first place, to put it up in such a shape as will satisfy the requirements of the Land Commissioners; and in the next place, he has to pay off the whole cost of the buildings over a comparatively short period of time, 25 or 30 years, and those two things together operate very much to deter a landowner from dividing holdings and putting up new buildings.

4440. A landowner cannot afford, can he, as a commercial speculation, to put up buildings with money borrowed upon its present terms under existing Acts?—No.

4441. At the same time, do I rightly understand that you do not think that the State would be justified in lengthening the term for such buildings?—No; I do not think that there would be the same objection to lengthening the term.

4442. Is the life of such buildings fairly calculable at much more than 25 years?—Certainly.

4443. In the case of cottages?—Yes; the cottages which are being put up in my own county by the large landowners will last for 100 or 200 years; there is nothing to prevent it that I know of.

4444. I suppose if the time were lengthened from, say, 25 to 40 years, that would make a difference of only about one-half or three-quarters per cent. in the annual instalments?—I do not know, but my notion is that it would be rather more than that; at present the instalments are about 6½ per cent. My impression is that it would make a difference of at least one per cent., but I have not looked at the tables.

4445. Assuming that by any means the interest could be reduced from 6 *l.* 12 *s.* per cent. to 5 *l.* per cent., do you think that that would induce a number of landlords to divide their property into small holdings and to put up buildings?—I would rather not answer for other men; I do not think one can speak in that way generally for a whole class, because one man may wish to

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Chairman—continued.

divide his property with a view not strictly to commercial results, but because he wishes to see that the country-side looking better and happier, and to attain that he may be ready to make a pecuniary sacrifice

4446. I want to put aside what I may call sentimental considerations; what I want to know is whether, as a matter of commercial interest, it would pay a landlord to put up these buildings and to divide his estate if the interest were reduced from say 6*l.* 12*s.* per cent. to 5*l.* per cent.?—I hear of good land being sold in Essex now for 10*l.* an acre, and I should think it would be a most profitable speculation for a man to buy property in large blocks at that price, and to put up buildings upon easy terms, and to bring farmers from Wales or the north to cultivate these smaller holdings.

4447. Do you think that the tenants would be able to pay a sufficient rent to cover all the expenditure?—I should think, judging from my own experience in Montgomeryshire, they would. Of course I have no business to speak about the soil or climate of Essex, but I do not understand why they should not.

4448. What I am anxious to find out is, whether, in your opinion, independent of and beyond any facilities that may be given to people to become owners, we could materially assist the process which you say would otherwise be profitable to a landowner, of the division of their farms into small tenancies?—The only way in which I think it could be done is by their borrowing the money on easier terms than they do at present. It seems to me that the result of small holdings in my county is so encouraging as to make it probable that the big English farms of from 500 up to 1,000 acres would, if broken up, pay very much better rents than they are paying at present, and rents that would pay interest upon the outlay necessary for altering the conditions.

4449. But I suppose that you have not gone into the details, and can hardly say at what interest it would pay to make this change?—No; some of the larger English land agents would be the right people to give you estimates for that.

4450. Then, as regards the facilities for the creation of owners, as I understand, you would lend money to purchasers to assist them in becoming owners?—Yes.

4451. I assume that you would do that upon the same principle as has been adopted in Lord Ashbourne's Act and other Irish Acts, namely, that the instalment would be spread over a considerable period?—Yes.

4452. Would you advance the whole of the purchase-money, or would you require the purchaser to find a proportion?—I think I should require him to find some portion of it.

4453. Do you think that there are many labourers, and others of that class, who would be able to find a proportion, say one-fourth of the purchase-money?—Yes, I am sure of it, and for this reason: I am a trustee of our savings bank, and I attend for a month once or twice a year, and every now and then I notice a withdrawal of a comparatively large sum of, say 100*l.* or 200*l.*; I ask the man what he is going to do with it, and he says, "I have taken a little place and I want to stock it." I know that there is a considerable amount of money held in that way in savings banks, and the money which would go to stock a small place could also go to pay some proportion of the purchase-money.

Chairman—continued.

4454. Would you carry out such a transaction through the local authority?—Yes.

4455. That is to say, the local authority would buy the land, and would borrow the money from the State, and then lend a proportion of the purchase-money, say three-fourths of the purchase-money, to enable a man to purchase?—I do not know that I would encourage the local authority to go into the market and buy; I would rather do it in this way: as soon as a small occupier satisfied a local authority of his *bona fides*, I would authorise them to lend whatever was the agreed proportion of the purchase-money which he had settled to pay for the farm.

4456. But you would leave him to make the arrangement first, and then to bring it up to the local authority?—Yes.

4457. Would you give the local authority any compulsory power of purchase?—I do not think it would be necessary in the district with which I am acquainted.

4458. You think there would be enough land to be sold voluntarily to supply the demand?—Yes, I think so at present.

4459. Have you seen the Bill which is now before the House of Commons which was introduced by Mr. Jesse Collings?—Yes, I have seen the Bill, but I cannot say that I have read it with adequate care.

4460. You are aware, I presume, that one novel principle in the Bill is that the sum loaned by the local authority shall be a perpetual charge upon the holding?—Yes.

4461. That the purchaser is to have all the incidents of freehold, but to be subject to a perpetual quit-rent in the shape of interest upon the loan?—Yes.

4462. Do you approve of that?—No, I do not.

4463. What is your objection?—In the first place I think that the main reason for imposing the condition is to secure that the holder is not out of capital before he goes on the land. That can be met just as well by paying off the loan by easy instalments.

4464. That is the object of course of all proposals for lending money to purchasers whether the loan is ultimately repaid or not?—Yes.

4465. We have had it in evidence from Mr. Jesse Collings that his preference for this particular proposal is due to two things; in the first place, he thinks it would enable the local authority to keep a hold over the land, and to insure certain conditions which he desires to maintain in the general interests, to prevent sub-letting and sub-division, and absentee landlordism; secondly, that it would offer to the local authority the inducement of a profit upon the transaction, ultimately coming in relief of the rates; what do you say to those two points?—As regards the first point, the power of control and management, it seems to me that it is not necessary to establish the relations of landlord and tenant in order to secure

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Chairman—continued.

secure that; it could be done just as well by an extension of the powers of the Public Health Act.

4466. You consider that any conditions that it might be necessary, in the interests of the State, to enforce upon these small holders, could be enforced by an extension of the powers of the General Act?—Yes; just in the same way as you regulate buildings in large towns, so you might regulate the occupancy of land in the country; and in dealing with small holdings in the country the rural sanitary authority would be quite as competent to see to the observance of conditions of that kind as the corporations are in towns.

4467. In that case the penalty for the non-fulfilment of the conditions would be to re-enter, would it not; it would mean the forfeiture of the land?—Ultimately, of course, it must be so. The penalty would necessarily be only a pecuniary payment; you would not imprison a man for misconduct of that kind, and the result of requiring a pecuniary payment would be that the man would have to go.

4468. As regards the second point, do you think it reasonable that the local authority, as representing the whole of the ratepayers, should have some ultimate profit to look to out of a transaction from which only a portion of the ratepayers are benefited?—This is a mere abstract opinion of mine, but I may say that I would rather that the local authority should not engage in any sort of commercial transactions; my view is that their business is simply to raise contributions year by year for annual purposes, and the more strictly they keep inside that the better.

4469. I suppose your experience of local authorities is entirely rural?—Quite so.

4470. Do you know anything of the operations of great corporations in large cities?—I have the pleasure of having several friends in Birmingham, and I know how very well things have been managed there; but I only know it in that way; I have no intimate knowledge.

4471. The Corporation of Birmingham, for instance, carries on a great business in connection with gas, another great business in connection with water, and a third great business as landowners in connection with the Artizans' Dwellings Improvement Act; the Corporation of Birmingham owns nearly 2,000,000 *l.* sterling of landed property. In all these cases are you aware whether there has been any complaint of the management of the local authority?—No, not at all, and as I said at the beginning, it is only a sort of theoretical abstract objection on my part; what has brought it home most strongly to my mind is the case of the tithe. A payment, such as Mr. Jesse Collings contemplates, would, in the course of years, as it seems to me, come to be looked upon simply as a special tax paid by a special class, and there would be every tendency to regard it if times got bad as a special oppression which that class would be entitled to be relieved of.

4472. You think that future generations would forget its origin as a charge upon the land, and would regard it as a particular tax upon themselves?—Yes.

4473. That is independent of the question whether the local authority could satisfactorily manage commercial undertakings; it is a different order of ideas, and a different objection?—Yes, and I may say that my whole objection belongs much more to that order of ideas than the question of how far public management is better than the private management of these undertakings.

4474. You think that if this were a permanent charge, a time would come when there would be a resistance to its payment?—I think it is quite conceivable.

4475. Therefore you would prefer that opportunities should be granted to a man to pay off all the loan in the ordinary way, sooner or later?—Yes.

4476. Mr. Jesse Collings proposes that three-fourths of the purchase-money should remain as a perpetual charge; would your objection be as great if it were one-fourth instead of three-fourths, that is to say, if the charge becomes a very small charge?—The only objection which I have pointed out, namely, as to the origin being forgotten, and its being looked upon as a tax would be exactly the same, only the amount would be less.

4477. It would be the same in principle, but not quite the same in degree?—That is so; there would be less practical risk.

4478. I suppose, in the first case, when three-fourths were left as a perpetual loan, the charge might be in bad times a very heavy one in proportion to the man's income?—I can quite conceive that it would swallow it up.

4479. It might be a rack-rent?—Yes.

4480. In that case there would be naturally discontent, in your opinion?—Yes.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

4481. You said that you believed that your occupants would be all Jonathan Crooks; is yours a very exceptional part of the country as regards these small holdings, or have you a similar experience of other parts of the country?—I have no intimate experience of any part of the country except my own. I know nothing of other counties except by occasional visits, and going through them on the railway.

4482. Would you say that the land is exceptionally favourable with you for these small holdings?—No, I would not say that; but I think it would be exceptionally unfavourable for large holdings, because the natural aspect of the country is very much diversified, and an owner could not cultivate land which is all ups and downs with the steam plough, and in large fields.

4483. You spoke of small holdings being held in combination with certain other occupations; do you consider that these holdings, if they were owned, would suffice for the maintenance of the people without separate occupations?—I think that is entirely a question of circumstance and degree, and also of the individual characteristics of the man. One of my correspondents gives me a case of a man who brought up a family, and has now gone into a large farm who originally started with a holding of only 14 *l.* a year.

4484. And now he farms it apart from any other occupation?—Yes.

4485. Whatever may be thought of the theory, as long as they are tenants, it is more or less of an

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

an experiment which could be abandoned if it did not answer; but if they became owners you would consider that the risk would be greater, would you not?—No, I think not; I think that nothing short of a complete change in the framework of our society would alter their condition.

4486. Would you not consider that if they were owners they could hardly follow other occupations at the same time?—I think they could, just as this man I have referred to did. These farmers of from 15 down to three or four acres follow other occupations.

4487. They work the holdings, I presume, by means of their families?—Yes.

4488. I take it for granted that they are not a class of persons who would employ servants?—Certainly not; it is entirely done by themselves. There is scarcely a farmer in our county that does not do a day's work himself.

4489. I understand you to say that you do not see why an arrangement of loans of money might not answer; but if the transaction was done through the local authority there would be no question that it must pay. There would be no possibility of public money being lent out and not paying?—Quite so.

4490. Therefore, as I understand, you would think there was a difficulty about its being done through the local authority; is it on that account that you object?—No; my objection was really quite abstract and theoretical, to giving a local authority anything more than annual taxation. I dislike the idea of local authorities being also owners of property.

4491. But you are aware, I suppose, that the idea of using the public money in this way has been widely promulgated, so that the people are somewhat caught by it?—Yes.

4492. You would say, would you not, that it has hardly been brought before them, that transactions of this kind, involving the loan of money, must pay?—I think those of them who have thought about it at all are quite aware of that.

4493. You mentioned an interesting thing as as to what you observed with regard to the withdrawal of money from savings banks for the sake of acquiring land?—Not for acquiring land. I was referring to people who were labourers, and who have been able to take a little place, and they withdraw the money to stock it; and my argument was that they could equally withdraw the money to pay a portion of the purchase-money.

4494. You would consider that a more legitimate method of acquiring or stocking land than an arrangement through the local authority?—I do not like to use the word "legitimate" or "illegitimate." My view is that we have got into a difficult position, and it is quite worth while to make an exceptional effort in order to get out of it.

4495. I gather that you do not much favour schemes of legislation for stimulating the extension of small holdings; but you would consider, would you not, for want of something of the kind, that the extension is rather at a stand still?—Yes.

4496. To what do you look for an extension of the system apart from legislation?—I think that landowners are getting to care less and less about holding large blocks of property. I see that in my own county even none of the large landowners are buying, and occasionally they are selling outlying pieces. There is a general tendency to sell outlying portions of land, whether the estates are large or whether they are small. Just as Lord Aylesbury has broken up his estates into a lot of different although still largish estates, so many men, who own from 3,000 to 10,000 acres, are selling off outlying farms, and concentrating their property round their own houses.

4497. Do you share the opinion expressed by several witnesses, that small holdings are on the whole more profitable than large ones?—"Profitable" is a very wide term. I can quite understand that you will get a larger profit to go into the pockets of capitalists if you cultivate the whole country by machinery; but I do not think that that is profitable.

4498. It would depend, I presume, upon the manner in which the small holdings were worked, whether they would be more profitable; is that your opinion?—I regard it in this way, that we do not look exclusively, when dealing with a question of this kind, to a return of so much per cent. The Committee sitting here has to look not merely to making the largest possible amount of profit, but also to having a satisfactory state of society, and it appears to me that the state of society which exists in my county is more satisfactory than the terrible ruin which has overtaken the system of large farm holding in the Midland and Southern Counties.

4499. You would admit that a landowner would have to look at the comparative profitableness of the one plan as compared with the other before he broke up his holding into small ones?—Yes; from the point of view of the landowner that must be considered.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

4500. Your favour towards small holdings is rather directed to bettering the condition of the working community generally than based upon a view of the matter from a commercial standpoint of profit and loss?—In the long run you can hardly separate the two; but primarily I have treated it as part of the general tendency that exists now to give the workers a larger share of the comforts of civilization.

4501. Is it your opinion that the opportunities for obtaining small holdings are almost the only hope of reward that can be offered to the industrious labourer?—I am not sure that I would go quite so far as that. If it were possible to establish a really efficient system of trades unions among farm labourers, I can quite conceive that a labourer on a large holding, managed like a large industrial concern, might be just as happy with his cottage and garden, and perhaps have more money to spend upon other luxuries, than he would as a small holder under the system which we are familiar with, which actually exists and is in operation in many counties

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

ties in England; but the one is ready to hand and the other is very remote.

4502. Because, as a rule, under the present system of farming, he does not get his share of the profits?—I understand not. I see very terrible reports from corn-growing counties, and the counties of large farms, as to the condition of agricultural labourers; and I assume that there is something in that.

4503. Does your experience lead you to think that there is a disposition among landowners generally, say in England, to dispose of the outlying plots, as is the case in your county?—I have not sufficient knowledge of the social conditions of other counties to answer a question like that. So far as my impressions go, from what I hear in society, and what I read, the tendency is in the direction rather of the dispersal of aggregates of land than of their consolidation.

4504. Is that in your own county only?—I know it takes place in my own county; and the result of what I read and hear is, that I imagine the same process is going on in other counties.

4505. Do you mean other counties in Wales or in England?—In England. I gave as an instance to Sir Charles Dalrymple, a few minutes ago, Lord Aylesbury's property. Lord Aylesbury is selling his estates; he is not selling the Aylesbury property in one lump; but he has sold the Yorkshire estate to two or three or four different purchasers. That is the kind of thing I have in mind when I say that there is a gradual dispersal of large aggregates of land.

4506. But it is not sufficiently rapid, in your opinion, as to warrant Parliament in withholding legislation?—No.

4507. Then with regard to the purchase of these small holdings, do you think it would be better that the cultivators should ultimately, under a deferred system of payment, become the owner of the whole of it, or that the county authority should hold a rent charge in perpetuity?—I think it is very much better that the man should be the absolute owner.

4508. You know the proposal in the Bill now before Parliament that the county authority should own three-fourths of the land?—Yes.

4509. Do you think that that would operate to some extent in preventing a small holder doing the best with his holding?—I think it would be one objection, because the margin is so very narrow. A succession of bad times, and one thing or another might, as I said before, easily sweep away a fourth of the whole value. It has done so, as we all know, in the case of rents; 25 per cent. is a very small estimate of the amount which has been taken off the net receipts of the men who own land simply for the purpose of letting it.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

4510. Do you find, as a rule, that the small tenants in Wales are thrifty and industrious and save money?—Yes, certainly. Of course there are a few drunkards and slovens among them, as in all classes; but, as a rule, they certainly are industrious.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

4511. Do they pay up their rents regularly?—Very well indeed.

4512. Do they ask for an extension of time; are there many cases of arrears of rent?—I have been obliged of course, like everybody else, to give remissions, and to give time in some cases; but I have no serious case of default excepting where there has been a screw loose in the man somewhere or other; either he has taken the farm with insufficient capital to begin with, or he was not a steady man, or his health has utterly broken down.

4513. What are the chief products of the small holdings in your own district?—Fruit, poultry, and butter.

4514. Have they good markets available at a convenient distance?—Very fair. On my Berview property (the property which is more like an ordinary English property) the market town is within five or six miles, and there is a railway there. Very large amounts of these products go off every market-day and fair-day. I asked the manager of the railway company if he could give me any figures; but he said that all these classes of traffic were so much lumped up together that he could not separate fruit and poultry, and so on, without a great deal of labour; but still he said it was a very good traffic.

4515. You consider, I think, that the produce per acre on small holdings is larger than that of large holdings?—That is a very large question. All I can say about it is that small holdings pay a higher rent per annum, and the holders themselves seem to be comfortable according to their standing in life.

4516. Then as regards the amount of stock that is reared; I take it that all the small holders rear, for the size of the holding, a large amount of stock?—Yes; I should think so. I should say in my district the small holdings are nearly all grass; I should think it would be quite fair to say that three-fourths of the land of the small holders is grass.

4517. Have they any difficulty with regard to implements; is there any system carried on of borrowing from one another as regards ploughs, carts, harrows, or even horses?—As I have already said, I never hear any complaints from small holders. In the case of men who try to work as ordinary farmers on an insufficient quantity of land, there is some difficulty, because they cannot borrow the horses just when they are wanted. I think in these cases a man must have enough land of an adequate quality to keep a pair of good horses.

4518. Have there been serious difficulties with regard to the buildings that have been erected by the tenants of small holdings themselves upon their holdings; I mean as regards compensation?—No, there has been nothing whatever of that kind in our county. I have heard of such cases in other counties; indeed I have heard at second hand of similar cases in my own county, but none have come under my own knowledge.

4519. Then the question of compensation for buildings is generally amicably settled between the landlord and the tenant, or does the incoming tenant pay any portion of the cost of the erection of

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued

of the building?—If there is any question of that kind I should say that it is always settled between the landlord and the tenant, so far as my experience goes; but I am only speaking with a little experience of one side of the county.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

4520. I understand you to say that in your county there is no difficulty in tenants obtaining small tenancies?—There is very great competition for them. If I had one to let to-morrow, I should get half a-dozen applicants at once, and that is the experience of every owner of similar property in the county, I am sure.

4521. There is a very large demand for them then?—Yes.

4522. But is there any refusal on the part of the owners of land to let their land in that way?—Certainly not.

4523. They are glad to let their land in that way, you think?—We have not got the same difficulties that apparently exist in other parts of the country. Changes of tenancy are not very frequent, and if there is a farm to be let there is almost invariably a considerable number of applicants, whether the farm is what we should call a large one or whether it is a small one. There is no sentimental wish on the part of the landowners, I think, to throw farms together simply because they think that a large holding is better than a small one.

4524. Are the landowners in your part of the country large landowners?—I forget the figures; there are three or four large estates in the country, and a dozen or so of medium estates, but the number of small occupying owners is very small indeed.

4525. I understand your proposal is that the local authority should advance money to the individual who has made his own bargain for the purchase of the land?—Yes.

4526. With a view to that individual becoming the owner?—Yes, and occupier.

4527. But how would you in any way insure the man remaining the occupier of that land which he has purchased?—During the currency of the instalments it would be necessary to have some regulations which would insure the proper cultivation and the proper habitation of the land. I do not think I would go further than that.

4528. After the last instalment was paid the man of course would become the absolute freeholder, and would be able to deal with his land as he pleased?—Yes; but subject, as I said in my evidence-in-chief, to extensions of the Public Health Act, which would empower the sanitary authority to stop any dealing with the land which would be clearly injurious to the general well-being of the country-side.

4529. Then do you contemplate that the local authority would forbid the aggregation of more than a certain amount of land in the hands of any one owner?—I think that it would be hardly necessary to do that, because I think the motives for aggregating land would not exist in the same way. The holdings would sell just for their market price, quite apart from any considerations of sentiment and political influence, or the like,

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

and the occupying owners would be the people who would give the best prices for them.

4530. Do you not find now that a man who has a little bit of land wants to get a little bit more?—Yes, he does.

4531. Do you find that there is any limit to that desire?—I think that the limit is perceptibly growing; I mean that a generation or two ago men bought estates simply in order to get a large amount of shooting or a large amount of political or social influence. They are finding now that holding a large estate does not give them so much return in that way as it used to do.

4532. I was referring to rather a different class; do you not find that small holders are anxious to add to their small holdings?—Yes, they are, for actual occupation.

4533. Do they go on adding?—Yes.

4534. And the desire of a small tenant is to become a large tenant?—Yes.

4535. Would not the same natural law obtain if a man were an owner in this way: even if he had started as a small owner, would he not wish to become gradually a larger owner?—Yes; I should see no objection to it, so long as his desire was checked by natural causes. At present it must be remembered the desire to become a large owner has been fostered by the legislature or by social and political causes. Those fostering causes being taken away, I would leave matters to adjust themselves by the ordinary laws of the market.

4536. You think that a small holder will only add to his holding to a reasonable extent, and that there is nothing to impel him to acquire an unreasonable amount of land in his hands?—What you really want to stop is undue and illegitimate influence of property, and once the present state of things has come to an end, I think that, with the growth of education and the increase of political power, which is now placed in the hands of all classes, landed property would not be bought in order to give political power, but would simply be bought as an investment; and I should not interfere with that.

4537. Do you think that some system of that sort will be sufficient to retain the best men on the land?—Yes. I would rather not call it a system, because, as I said before, I look upon it simply as a temporary operation to meet what I think is a temporary evil.

4538. Do not you think that the attractions of the towns will always draw the best man in the country off to the towns?—That again is a very wide question, but I think they will not; I think that the attractions of the country are very great indeed, and now that the best men have an opening for themselves, and there is an opening for local men, with ambition, in the district councils and county councils, there would be less reason for the more intelligent and vigorous men deserting the country and going into the towns.

4539. Is it your experience in your own county that the best and steadiest men gravitate toward the large centres of the population?—No; I think not.

4540. Do you think it is the worst class who go?—The worst class, of course, go just as a man

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

man in the upper class when he comes to grief goes off to the Continent. Some of the better men go if there is no room for them, but the majority of men who stay on the land are certainly thoroughly first-rate men of their class in every way; they are good workers, and of good moral character.

4541. Might I ask what the particular questions were which you sent out to your friends?—I will give you a copy of them (*handing the same to the honourable Member*).

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

4542. I want to ask one or two questions about the balance-sheets which you put in: I take it in both these cases that the profits shown in the balance-sheets did not keep entirely the families of the tenants?—No.

4543. In addition to working on his holding, I see in the foot-note in the case of A. B., it is said, "he adds to his income by doing garden work for neighbours in the summer, and by killing pigs in the winter"?—Yes; he is what we should call in the country a handy-man, he is a good gardener, and he knows how to kill pigs; he helps in gardens in the summer, and kills pigs in the winter.

4544. One of those cases you say shows a profit of 26 *l.* 10 *s.*?—Yes.

4545. In addition to that, I suppose he earns about a similar amount at job-work?—I have not the least idea what the amount would be, but I dare say he might.

4546. What are about the wages in your part of the country?—About 15 *s.* a week.

4547. And a house?—No; without a house.

4548. Does such a man as this readily find employment at weekly wages with farmers, or by yourself on your estate?—Yes; one of these two men until he got rather more land (he began with seven or eight acres) used to work regularly among my woodmen and drainers; and then he got another five acres of land put to him, and he got rather old, and now he only comes occasionally and does a job of work, such as fencing in the winter, and hoeing turnips.

4549. He is glad to get a job?—Yes; but you must not think he would be starving for want of it.

4550. You do not think that a small holding of five, 10, or 15 acres would interfere with a man carrying on his regular employment as well, provided that he had not to go too far to work?—I do not think so, but 15 acres is rather a large holding for that; it would depend how much of it was arable.

4551. Five acres or seven acres would be more like it, you think?—Yes.

4552. I understood you to say that you would prefer, with a view to assisting this class of agriculturist, for the loans to be made direct to the individual, rather than through the local authority?—No, I did not explain my position quite clearly. What I should contemplate would be that the man should make his bargain for the land with the vendor, and when he had satisfied the local authority that it was all straightforward and there was no collusion between him and the vendor for selling the land at a higher price than it was worth, then the local authority should be empowered to advance him a certain amount up to whatever margin might be thought the right one, say half or three-fourths.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

4553. Do you propose that the local authority should decline to advance beyond, say, three-quarters of the purchase-money?—Yes, I think so.

4554. On the other hand, supposing that the proposals of Mr. Jesse Collings were carried out, and the local authority borrowed money for the purchase of properties, and then let out those properties, can you, from your experience, foresee any difficulty in the case of the local authority having an unsatisfactory tenant?—Yes, I think it would be a very unpleasant thing to have to discuss at the board-room how you should deal with a man who was not doing very well, and whether he was doing sufficiently badly to be turned out or not.

4555. He might be doing harm to the holding?—Yes.

4556. Supposing that a man went right away to America, there would then be a considerable difficulty, would there not, supposing that he had lowered the value of his land?—Yes, of course there would.

4557. Is that in your opinion one of the chief objections you have to the scheme?—Yes.

4558. During the last 10 years, through the bad times, how did the small holders get on; how did they tide over the time of bad prices, and so on?—I really hardly know.

4559. Did many of them come to grief?—No; as I said a little time ago, not one of my own tenants has come to grief except for some reason extraneous to his holding, and my experience is not at all exceptional, I am sure; my property would be just about the average of Montgomeryshire property.

4560. You said, I think, that one of the replies to the question sent out was that the small men did best except where there were mortgages on the property?—Yes, that is the universal testimony of my correspondents.

4561. Whom did they borrow the money from?—It may have been from small capitalists in the country, or quite possibly from some of these loan offices.

4562. What rate did they pay?—One of my correspondents says from 4 to 4½ per cent., but I expect in some cases they paid more.

4563. And these men did not come off so well as the men who were renting land from landlords in the neighbourhood?—No.

4564. What is the poor rate among you?—I think about 9 *d.* in the £.

4565. It is purely agricultural?—Yes.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

4566. I think you said in your earlier evidence that the disappearance of cottages is one of the chief obstacles to the restoration of small holdings?—Yes.

4567. I understand those cottages have practically worn out?—Yes.

4568. Have they been condemned to any large extent

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued

extent by the sanitary authority?—Some years ago when the Public Health Act was first passed and the powers given by that Act were exercised by the authority, a good many were condemned.

4569. How did that result?—Of course both the authorities and the landowners were very easy about it, but ultimately it has resulted in the cottages being pulled down and the people going.

4570. That is to say, the landlords preferred pulling down the cottages to putting them into a sanitary condition?—Yes, or to rebuilding them entirely.

4571. In that way the people have been drawn a good deal from the country-side into the small villages?—Not into small villages, but into large towns; we have not aggregation in the villages as you have in the Midlands.

4572. I suppose in that way you account to some extent for the depopulation of the country?—Yes. I should like to read upon that point the answer of a very intelligent correspondent of mine, but I cannot at the moment find the letter.

4573. Can you give us the purport of what he said?—The purport of it was that the falling off in the general population of the country was due to a great extent to the decrease in the mining industry, and in the small flannel weaving industry, which is carried on locally, but also due to the fall in agricultural prices, and consequently there was considerable emigration of farmers and farmers' sons to the Colonies and to the United States.

4574. You believe that the advantage of small holdings to the community would be so great, both from a social and economic point of view, that it is desirable that you should have some legislation in order to promote it?—Yes.

4575. And these small holdings, I presume, you would have of graduated sizes?—Yes.

4576. How large and how small would you have them?—Every little bit of land is valuable, of course. I do not think any cottage ought to be built in the country without having a good garden. Then from that the graduation would be absolutely insensible up to farms of 100 or even 1,000 acres.

4577. You would like to make them from 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, or 50 acres?—Yes.

4578. So that there would be a kind of progressive scale by which a man could rise from the position of a labourer, an allotment holder, to a small farmer?—Yes.

4579. You say that now the want of buildings is the chief obstacle to the creation of these small holdings?—Yes.

4580. And consequently if we have to put an agricultural labourer on to a plot of 10 or 15 acres the chief difficulty would be the buildings? Yes.

4581. How do you propose to get over that difficulty?—I think if the labourer had the land himself, especially in a county like ours, where there is a good deal of timber, he would start like the settler does in the Colonies; he would begin by building a very rude place indeed, and he would gradually improve it till it became a decent habitable cottage.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

4582. Bearing that in mind, I want to ask a question or two as to the proposed methods of legislation; taking the different schemes that have been before us; taking, first of all, the scheme that would leave the tenant with a perpetual charge upon three-quarters of the value of his holding, and a payment of one-fourth on entering, you would have there the case of a man having always a fair sized rent to pay, and you would have him paying, a considerable sum of money for him, upon entering the holding; do you not think that that payment would cripple him in the commencement of his business?—I think not. I think that those men are so marvellously frugal, and so skilful, and so many of them in my county, at all events, have got a little money put by, that it would enable them both to pay the instalment of the purchase money and to stock the farm in quite an adequate way.

4583. Could they find money for stock, and manure, and implements, and buildings?—You must remember I contemplate a state of things in which not very much manure and implements are wanted, because my experience is in a county where by far the larger part of the small holdings are in grass.

4584. Still one has to look at the matter broadly?—Yes.

4585. Do you not think that a man would be in a better position if, instead of having to pay 100 *l.* on entering his holding, he had that 100 *l.* for the purpose of working his holding, and buying these things, and putting up buildings?—No doubt the man would be better off.

4586. If he were a perpetual leaseholder at a fixed rent he would probably have more chance of success than under the scheme that has been suggested?—Yes; but than my objection on wider grounds comes in, that I think it is undesirable that the State should really be the landlord of a large number of small holdings. It would come to be looked upon as a very heavy land tax, and there would be a political agitation against it in times of trouble, and the State would be placed in an invidious position altogether.

4587. That would be got over by a scheme by which for 40 or 49 years the tenant would pay a rental which would leave him at the end of that time in the possession of the freehold with a quit-rent of, say, 5 *s.* an acre?—Yes; if the Treasury is satisfied with the security, I do not think there could be any objection.

4588. In that case you have the advantage of the man entering on possession with all his own resources unimpared, and able to make the best of the holding?—Yes. But still there would be for one generation and a half a difficulty, although I apprehend perhaps that over such a short period as that it would not be a very great one.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4589. I understand you to think that one of the best results of the prevalence of small holdings in Wales is that there is not a class of labourers who are labourers from father to son, as it were?—Yes, certainly.

4590. Do

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

4590. Do many of the labourers in Montgomeryshire and in other parts of Wales live on the homestead of the farmer who employs them?—Yes, they do; in large farms it is very general indeed that some of the labourers should live in the house, one or more as the case may be.

4591. And the general rule is that after serving for a number of years as unmarried labourers they look to a small farm when they get married, do they not?—Yes, a cottage at all events; if it is a farm so much the better.

4592. You are aware, are you not, that there are very many 20-acre or 30-acre farms on the hill-sides with a run for sheep on the hills?—Yes.

4593. Do you consider that the holders of those hill farms are a sturdy and intelligent class?—I think it is impossible to speak too highly of the intellectual, moral, and social capacities of that class.

4594. That is your experience with regard to the whole of North Wales?—Yes.

4595. As a rule they have survived, in face of grave difficulties, the depression wonderfully well, have they not?—Yes.

4596. Now 20 and 30 acres, of course, apart from the mountain sheep-walk, would be inadequate and insufficient, because the soil, I suppose, is thin?—Yes; my correspondents all answered my question as regards value, and not in regard to extent; they agree that the extent could be no criterion of what the land would do for supporting a family.

4597. Their right, therefore, to a run in the mountain makes all the difference between prosperity and practical failure, does it not?—Yes; but I ought to say here that I cannot speak at first hand about that, because in the parish in which my hill land lies all sheep-walks have been allotted to farms; each farm has its own sheep-walk; there is very little, if any, in commonalty. There are a few patches on which the tenants are entitled to turn out horses, and a few patches where there is a common for sheep; but, as a rule, the sheep-walks are held in severalty.

4598. Do you know whether in the districts where they are held in commonalty, the holders have the right of grazing sheep in proportion to the size of their holding?—I cannot answer that.

4599. Have you not noticed what Mr. Barclay Smith, the bailiff of Lord Penrhyn, said before the Duke of Richmond's Commission, that a man "is allowed two sheep for every acre of his holding in these small holdings; and three sheep per acre on large holdings"?—I do not understand that statement at all; I did notice it.

4600. Do you know of any instances where the farmers in Wales have objected to the system of inclosing mountain land?—No, I do not.

4601. You do not remember Lord Penrhyn's evidence upon that point where he says that as Lord Lieutenant he had to requisition the police and raise an additional force of police in order to put down the opposition of the peasants to the inclosure?—I know that in some parts of Wales there has been a very strong feeling indeed upon the subject of inclosures, which were supposed to have been made in the interests of the lord of the manor; but as I say in my own county I only have heard of it second hand, and I do not know at first hand anything about it.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

4602. You do not feel surprised, do you, that they should object to inclosure when the right of common is so very valuable to them?—Certainly not.

4603. In view of that, would you not think it would be a very great help to these small holders in the various parts of Wales, that the local authority should have some supervision over these vast tracts of common or Crown land on the hill sides in Wales?—Yes.

4604. I think you object to the scheme of the Small Holdings Bill of Mr. Jesse Collings, on the ground that you do not think it expedient that local authorities should hold property in land?—I think it is not expedient. I think that local authorities had better have the check of having to raise by taxation all the money that they spend, and not by looking to the rents of one particular part of their constituents as an important source of income.

4605. But do you not think that the consideration which the Chairman points out, that it has been of great value in municipalities, would be in itself an argument for a similar experiment in rural districts?—We get into the whole question of how far individual is better than communal management there. My own impression is that for these purposes it is very much better to let the individual look after his own interest, and only impose on him such regulations as are absolutely necessary to prevent his interfering with the comfort of others.

4606. But would not the profit, which would come from such a scheme as this of Mr. Collings' if fully carried out, be of general good to all the inhabitants within the rural district?—Whatever profit is made ultimately belongs to the State. You can always order a levy *en masse*, and you can order an income-tax of 20*s.* in the £. to be paid; I do not see what more can be wanted than that.

4607. Another objection you put forward was, that in time the municipal tenants or owners would look upon the quit-rent as objectionable, as they have looked upon the tithe as objectionable in Wales now?—Yes, I mean that it would be an odious form of payment, and wear the appearance of being a tax, and cease to be looked upon as a payment for value.

4608. Is it not a fact that the chief objection to such a payment as this, in the case of tithe, is due to its special and restricted application?—Certainly.

4609. That would not be so in the case of a quit-rent, would it?—It might or might not be; it might be so. Supposing there was great division of opinion as to how the public revenue should be spent?

4610. Surely there would be very little contention about any revenue that would lessen the rates?—I am not sure of that; it depends upon how large a portion of the ratepayers that revenue comes from. If the people who paid the rent were a large and influential proportion, and if they got to look upon it as a tax paid by them for the benefit of their fellow-citizens, there might be a good deal of difficulty.

4611. Would they not themselves feel that in paying

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

paying it they would be paying for objects of public good, of benefit to themselves, as well as to their neighbours, just as they do in paying the sanitary rate now?—I am assuming a case in which there is much difference of opinion, as to how the public money should be spent. So long as people are agreed as to the way of spending the public money, that difficulty would not arise.

4612. I want to ask you one question with regard to the replies which you received as to the estimates of the size of holdings on which it was possible for tenants to live; did I rightly understand you to say that the replies that you got from the hilly districts were that the tenants could live on farms which were rented at 30 *l.* or even below 30 *l.*, and from the rich and low lying districts the replies you received were that the farms would have to be 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* before a tenant could exist upon the farm without further employment?—Yes, it is quite remarkable; I have made out a list here, and every man who puts down 40 *l.* and upwards as the limit, either lives or farms in the north-east portion of the county, that is in the lower Valley of the Severn.

4613. How do you account for that difference?—It is partly because those farmers contemplate a different mode of managing the land; they contemplate ordinary farming with a pair of horses and with ordinary agricultural implements. That is one reason for the difference in estimate; it is also partly accounted for by the fact that in the hilly Welsh parts of the country the standard of living is simpler.

4614. Do you think that the standard of living and comfort in those districts is so low as to be prejudicial to the prosperity of the hill-side community?—No; I think not; I think that the statistics of crime and the accommodation for religious purposes, and all those social statistics, show conclusively that it is not.

4615. I think all your replies with regard to peasant owners were to the effect that they did well, except when hampered by mortgages?—Yes.

4616. You said that these mortgages had to be raised very often because tenants had given too large a sum for the holding originally?—Yes.

4617. That was specially the case with regard to the farms that were sold during the last 20 years or so?—Yes, during the last 20 years.

4618. Do you not consider that in cases where estates are in the market the sitting tenant in bidding for his own holding is at a considerable disadvantage as compared with the other competitors, because he is to a large extent bidding for and buying his own improvements?—Yes; that varies of course in different counties, and on different estates; I know there have been some cases (at least I have been told so on authority which I trust) of great hardship of that kind.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

4619. You handed in balance sheets of two small holdings; taking the case of A, B, I think you said he held five acres?—He has got five acres all grass, and the run of a wood besides.

4620. The net profit in that case is 29 *l.* 13 *s.* 9 *d.*?—Yes, that is what he and my agent have made out between them.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

4621. Has he any personal or family advantage besides, from the produce of that acreage?—I am not quite sure, but I think not. I think that includes what he consumes.

4622. That would be about 6 *l.* an acre, net profit?—Yes.

4623. With regard to the case of C, D, who has 15 acres, you say that the net profit is 16 *l.* 5 *s.* (in addition to 10 *l.*, milk and butter, as I see from the foot-note), after cost of maintenance; does that mean after the cost of working the farm, or after the cost of maintenance of the family?—I think it must mean after the cost of maintenance of the family.

4624. Can you give me an estimate of what the cost of maintenance of his family is?—I am afraid I cannot. I should be very glad if I may, to supplement those two balance sheets afterwards.

4625. The Chairman asked you some questions with regard to the perpetual mortgage system which is proposed in Mr. Collings' Bill; you said you feared that it would be regarded in time as a rack-rental, against which there might be almost a land war?—I only say that we know that there are fluctuations of prosperity, and that one-fourth is a very narrow margin in such cases; and it would be a very invidious thing for the State to be the absolute rack-renter of a great number of small holdings.

4626. But even if the local authority had to suffer that risk as a perpetual mortgagee, would not the same risk obtain with regard to any other owner or holder of that property?—Yes; but then the position of a private owner, and the position of the State in such instances is very different.

4627. If it were rented in an ordinary way the rental might be subject to reduction?—Yes, and it has been.

4628. Or the mortgagee's interest might be subject to diminution?—Yes.

4629. Or if it were acquired under Lord Ashbourne's Act, the State might lose its instalment in the same way?—Yes.

4630. There would be no special risk run by the local authority which would not be run by a landlord or a mortgagee, or by the State, in the other three cases?—No; the risk is exactly the same. The question is whether it is politic to impose that risk upon the State, rather than upon an individual.

4631. Apart from the question of the policy of creating a municipal, as apart from a State authority, the municipal authority would run no further risk than the State or the landlord, or the mortgagee in either of the three cases I have been putting?—I should not consider that it does.

4632. But the local authority in providing land for small holders, would pledge its credit for the small holders, would it not?—You mean, I presume, that it would have to borrow again from the State; it would in that sense.

4633. As partner in the transaction, ought it not to have some residue in the way of profit?—As I said before (but it is you may say merely a debating society objection) I prefer seeing the whole of the money which is spent by any public authority,

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

authority, raised by annual taxation and not from property: that is my only objection.

4634. Would not this be in the nature of annual taxation if it became a perpetual rent-charge?—Yes; but an annual taxation imposed, not upon the whole of the community equally, but upon one particular section of the community.

4635. But would it be imposed upon one particular section of the community; would it be imposed upon the small holders, would not it be imposed upon the land rather than upon the holder; for instance, you do not consider the rent a charge imposed upon the tenant, do you?—Unless the tenant works the land, there is no rent. I am quite aware that it is illegitimate for a landowner to put down rent as part of the cost of production; but still when we are dealing with it as a question of policy, you will find that the owner, who is subject to a heavy charge of that kind, will consider himself placed under the burden of exceptional taxation; at least that is my opinion.

4636. Your fear at any rate of resistance to the payment of this perpetual quit-rent is no greater than the fear of a strike against excessive rents, or a strike against excessive mortgage interest; it is only parallel with such resistance as that?—It is precisely the same, only that it is directed against a different body.

Sir *George Campbell.*

4637. I understood you to express the very highest opinion of small farmers upon the hill-sides in Wales. Is it your opinion that, speaking generally, sheep farming is a profitable form of farming for small holders?—Of course a man cannot on a small holding make a profit out of sheep farming alone, but on these high lands where a man has a holding, part of which he can cultivate, and on which he can also keep a cow, or two or three cows as the case may be, then the addition of a few sheep is very valuable to him.

4638. You think that in a hilly country a small farm which combines a little arable land with a certain amount of sheep farming is, upon the whole, an advisable and beneficial form of tenure?—Yes.

4639. Is it the case in Wales as it is many parts, that the best lands have been occupied by the large farms and the small farmers have been driven up to the hill sides, and down into the bogs?—No, I do not think you can say that generally; at all events as regards the part of Wales with which I am most familiar.

4640. Large farmers have not much come in in Wales, I understand?—No; there are cases, but they are not so numerous as to make it a general rule.

4641. I understand you to say that many of these small holders are men with other occupations?—Yes.

4642. Do you think that that is a beneficial form of holding?—Yes, I do.

4643. You said, I think, that the chief products of these small holdings were fruit, butter, and poultry; does that apply to small farms where the man lives by the farm?—No; in the case of that class of small farms, the butter would be

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

rather important in our part of the country, but the poultry and fruit would be only subsidiary.

4644. What kind of fruit do they grow in your part of the country?—Damsons, apples, gooseberries, and currants.

4645. I thing you told us that one of the great reasons for not maintaing small farms was as the buildings became old and dilapidated it was difficult to replace them. Can you tell us what has been the origin of these old buildings, were they erected by the landlord or by the tenant?—My impression is that, in a great many cases they were small freeholds which may have been in some cases stolen, as they say off the waste, and then sold by the original squatters to a landowner with very inferior erections upon them; or, in other cases, they were small freeholds without any infirmity of title of that kind; but still with only such buildings as were considered sufficient at that time.

4646. At present, I believe, throughout Wales generally, the system is that the landlord erects the buildings and does the improvements, and not the tenant?—I should not like to speak with confidence as to other parts of Wales; but I think that it is fair to say that, as a rule, it is so.

4647. You do not know parts of Wales in which it is the habit of the tenant to erect his own buildings, and to make his own improvements?—Not to the extent to which one reads of it in Ireland; but I know that there are cases in Wales in which the tenants have done a good deal in that way.

4648. Have you ever had any system of what is called in Scotland "meliorations," under which the tenant puts up the buildings, and is entitled to turn them over at a valuation at the end of the term?—I know of no system of that kind; but I know that, occasionally the landlord and a tenant will make a bargain to that effect.

4649. That you say is occasionally done?—Yes.

4650. Under the present system in Wales, who does the repairs?—The landlord, as a rule. It is very difficult to lay down any absolute general rule; but I should say that, in the majority of cases, the substantial repairs are done by the landlord.

4651. Does the tenant not do repairs even to the extent that a London householder does the repairs?—The conditions are so different that one can hardly compare them; the houses are so simple, and the fittings are so plain, that there is really nothing to be done. It is much more a question of putting on a slate, or of mending gates on the farm, and things of that sort.

4652. Does the landlord do that?—The landlord supplies the gates; but he does not mend them. The landlord generally sends an estate workman to mend the roofs if it is a serious matter. Of course, if it is only a slate or two, the tenant would do it himself.

4653. Confining ourselves to tenancies only, you think that there would be great difficulty in making State advances to landlords in order to enable them to put up buildings, and such-like

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

work; I understand you to say that, the requirements of a public body like the Land Commissioners, and the expenses involved, are such that it would probably be less profitable for a landlord to go to a public body than it would to make private arrangements?—Yes, in consequence of the land being in strict settlement, and the Land Commissioners looking upon it as their business to protect the remainder-men against the tenant for life.

4654. The last witness we had from Wales spoke of the interest upon money as being 3½ per cent.; can a man privately borrow money upon the security of good land as low as 3½ per cent.?—I should not have thought so; but if any witness has said that I would not contradict it.

4655. With a view to the encouragement of small holdings, have you considered the question which was at at one time very much agitated in Scotland of what was called the law of hypothec, which is the law under which the landlord has the first right upon the crop and stock, and which was abolished at the instance of the large farmers, who said that it gave rise to increased competition for land; have you had anything corresponding to that in Wales, or would you consider that as beneficial to the small farmer?—I doubt whether it is a very satisfactory way of giving him credit, that is all it comes to, I think; at any rate, if such a system ever existed, it has very much diminished now, and is almost extinct.

4656. Have you ever considered a system which, I believe, exists in some of the Colonies, under which stock can be mortgaged as a security for loans?—I know there is such a system; and I recollect a Bill being introduced some five or six years ago into the House of Lords for carrying that out; but I do not think it ever went further.

4657. As regards the erection of buildings, do you think that anything can be done to improve the law so as to induce tenants to erect buildings upon lease in case the landlord will not, or cannot do so, some rights of compensation being reserved?—I think that it would be very desirable to simplify and amend the law of compensation for improvements, and for disturbance.

4658. You think that there is room for improvement in that respect?—Yes; but I think the operation of such a law would be rather indirect than direct; I think it would tend to compel landlords and tenants to make shorter and clearer bargains. The great difficulty in my experience in regard to the question of compensation is that the subject-matter itself is so indeterminate. As a big land agent said to me not long ago, "of all things I detest most underground valuations;" by which he meant the valuations of artificial manures, and feeding stuffs that had been used on the land.

4659. I am dealing now only with overground valuations, such as buildings, and so on. That objection would hardly apply so much there, would it?—Even there there is great room for difference of opinion, first as to the proper cost of the building, and then as to its being suitable for the land.

4660. One witness who gave evidence here told us that a tenant never would put buildings upon another man's land whatever terms were given to him. Would you concur in that opinion?—Not at all; because one of my own tenants, for instance, is now putting up a building under an arrangement with me; it is true it is not one of very great importance; it is what we call a Dutch barn; that is to say, a corrugated iron roof on oak pillars.

4661. Might I ask what the general nature of the arrangement with the tenant in that case has been?—Yes, I provide the greater part of the timber materials, and the tenant does the work; and there is to be a valuation if there is any change of tenancy, and credit is to be given on each side for the value of the contribution which each has made.

4662. That is very much on the system of "melioration," which existed in some parts of Scotland; do you think that that is a system which might be extended?—I considered the subject a good bit when I came to that agreement, and I was satisfied with it, and my tenant was satisfied with it.

4663. Do you think upon the whole the practical difficulties in the way of erecting buildings, and making improvements on small farms, are such that it is difficult to get over them in any other way than by ownership?—I am afraid so; because if a man puts up a building for himself, he is the judge of his own requirements, and he need only be limited by the regulations of the sanitary authority, which will see that he does not make himself a nuisance to his neighbours; but when two men have to agree about a building there is sure to be difficulty.

4664. I should like to ask whether you have considered this point; supposing that the State in order to facilitate the creation of small holdings were to make advances to prudent and industrious men, do you not think there might be a great fear that after such a man had laboriously throughout his lifetime paid the instalments to the State, and become a freeholder, when you came to the next generation the same causes might operate which have operated in the past to diminish small holdings, and that the State might be undertaking a kind of labour of Tantalus in creating small holdings, which might be again dissipated?—You cannot have perfection; all you can do is to provide whatever remedy seems best at the present time for the present evil. I would meet that point as to subdivision, as I said before, by some extension of the powers of the Public Health Act.

4665. Then upon the whole question of the creation of small holdings, what you would be inclined to advocate is entire free trade in land?—Yes; if you add to that regulation by a competent local authority.

4666. Then as regards your objection to the system of perpetual rents, that in the course of time there might be a strong feeling against these rents as being a very heavy land tax, do you not think that that feeling is due to a certain extent to the peculiar English system under which the land has been freed from taxation of this kind. Having regard to the fact that in other countries the land is after all the main subject

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

subject of public revenue, and that the land being given by God is considered to be the fund from which the expenses of the State are met, and that the revenue of the State is not regarded as a tax, do you not think that if that system came to be generally recognised here that the risk to which you have alluded might be obviated?—That is a very large question. My answer to it would be perhaps first of all that the faith of the State is pledged to existing owners, and if you make any great change in the incidence of taxation you simply destroy the property of the present generation of owners of land. That would be a very impolitic thing to do, because you would have a whole class just like the peasants in Ireland or the *noblesse* in France, who would cherish hereditary rancour against the people who had confiscated their land. Then in the next place, when you say that taxation comes from the land, I should like to point out that it really comes from the produce of the land. Unless the land is worked by the cultivator aided by the capitalist, the land produces nothing. It is the produce of the land from which you take the portion of the money that is applied to public purposes.

4667. But supposing that you do not confiscate the land, but that you buy it from the present holders, or take it by some public arrangement, and put the small holder whom you create in the same position as the small holders are in France, or in every other country in Europe, or as they are in India, on a system under which they pay a very heavy land tax, do you think that in that case if the system became general there would be the danger to which you allude?—It might be so, I think, because I do not think that such a system provides for the fluctuation of values which takes place from time to time; and in that case, as I said some little time ago, it might, in my opinion, be said that you were raising your whole taxation from one particular class of capital, namely, that which is applied to the cultivation of land.

4668. Would you call a perpetual rent-charge upon the land taxation?—In effect it is, because it is money which is taken out of the pockets of the cultivator and applied to the general purposes of the State.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4669. Do you know whether in parts of Montgomeryshire small holders complain of the exercise of the manorial rights?—Yes.

4670. Bitterly?—Yes.

Chairman.

4671. As to the question of the perpetual quit-rent, you were asked whether your objection was the same to rent, and to mortgage, and to annual payment under the Ashbourne Act; I understand your objection to a perpetual quit-rent to be, that in the course of time it might appear to be a tax instead of a payment for consideration, is that so?—Yes.

4672. Is there any fear that either a rent or interest of a mortgage would come to appear to be a tax; do not they differ from a perpetual quit-rent in that respect?—In everything that I have said upon that matter I have been looking forward, through very considerable periods of time, to a time when all the transactions which gave rise to these different relations are quite forgotten; and I still think that it is conceivable that under very altered conditions, although the annual payment might be called a quit-rent, or it might be called interest of a mortgage, the man who pays it, seeing that his neighbour is not paying any corresponding amount simply for the expenses of the State, would conceive, rightly or wrongly, that he was not fairly treated.

4673. I quite understand your objection as to the quit-rent; but what I wanted to ask you was, whether there was any similarity between such a quit-rent, and say, for instance, interest of a mortgage, which is a debt owing to a private individual, upon which he collects his interest annually; would the sentimental objections which in the course of time might creep up against the quit-rent, apply to a mortgage?—Not as long as the idea of mortgage was clearly before the mind of the mortgagor.

4674. I am speaking, of course, of the case of a mortgage by a private individual; if it were a mortgage by a local authority, I understand that the same sentiment might possibly arise?—Yes.

4675. That also makes a difference, does it not; I mean that the feeling of the payer towards the payee will be different, according to whether the payee is a public authority, such as a corporation, or an individual?—Yes, I think so.

4676. Then as regards the Ashbourne Act, is it not a fact, under that Act, that the payments are instalments by which the debt is gradually extinguished?—Yes, I believe so.

4677. So that in 49 years the tenant becomes absolute owner, and has no further payment to make?—Yes.

4678. The tenant sees therefore his debt gradually diminishing?—Yes.

4679. And if, as you have assumed, the agitation against the payment does not arise for a considerable period in the case of Lord Ashbourne's Act, whenever it did arise the tenant would be in the position of a person who had already paid off a large portion of the debt?—Yes.

4680. And who would be in the process of entirely extinguishing the remainder?—Yes.

4681. Do you not think that makes a great difference between the security of the State under the Ashbourne Act, and the security under such a proposal as has been suggested to you?—It makes all the difference; and my doubts were entirely confined to the operation of a continuous payment, and did not relate to terminable payments under the Ashbourne Act.

4682. The question I put was, whether the objection was the same to one as to the other, and I think you answered just now that it was; but you probably did not understand the question?—I certainly did not intend to say that the objection applied in the same way.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

4683. So far as the distant period of time is concerned, there would be a great difference, I apprehend, in your judgment; but within the

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

period of 50 years, that is, during the time that the repayment of the loan and principal would take place under the Ashbourne Purchase Act, and the continuous payment of quit-rent would be taken under the local authority, there would be no difference, would there; within 50 years, if there is no margin to pay the quit-rent, there would be no margin to pay interest and principal in the case of the Ashbourne Act; if a difficulty would arise with regard to the payment of quit-rent within 50 years, a difficulty would arise in regard to the payment of principal and interest under the Ashbourne Act, would it not?—Yes, to that extent, certainly.

4684. With regard to the sentimental objection, do you know of any objection which is not only a sentimental one to the heavy interest payable to mortgagees; have you heard of any demand made for the diminution by the State of interest payable to a mortgagee, owing to tillage of land at a loss?—Never perhaps: when I say "never," I might correct my answer in this way; of course I have heard, as everybody else has, of the claim of the Irish landlords to have the family charges and mortgages reduced in proportion to the rent.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

Chairman.

4685. But that claim is due, is it not, wholly to the fact that the State has already interfered to reduce their rent?—Quite so; my mind was directed for a moment to instances of which we have heard in this country, such as that of the Lincolnshire small freeholders, where I have heard the mortgages are very heavy; but I never heard of their agitating for a reduction of their mortgages.

Mr. Thomas Jones, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

4686. What are you?—A farmer.

4687. Where do you live?—At Brynmelyn, near Bala, in the county of Merioneth.

4688. What is the size of your farm?—I have about 300 acres of land.

4689. Are you acquainted with the state of agriculture in the district?—I am.

4690. What system is pursued? — Mixed, arable and pasture.

4691. What are the crops chiefly sown?—Oats, barley, a very little wheat, potatoes, turnips, &c.

4692. What is the size of the farms?—The size of the farms varies very much; from three or four hundred acres down to very small farms. The vast majority are under 100 *l.* rent.

4693. Are large farms the exception?—Yes.

4694. In your experience has there been any diminution of small holdings?—A great diminution.

4695. How has that diminution taken place?—By consolidating into larger farms.

4696. Is that still going on?—The tendency lately has been to check that.

4697. Do you think there is an advantage in maintaining small holdings side by side with large ones?—I do.

4698. Is there different work for the two classes of agriculturists to do?—It is not so much different work as it is the convenience for different classes of people.

4699. Is the tendency of the large farmers to improve agriculture and to improve the breed of stock?—Yes, he takes the lead in it.

4700. On the other hand, you think the small farmers give more personal supervision, and certainly obtain better results in that way?—Yes.

4701. What is the character of this class of small holders?—They are very thrifty and industrious and very frugal.

4702. Are they fairly prosperous?—Fairly; they manage to live and pay their way fairly.

4703. They have to work hard, I suppose?—

Chairman—continued.

Very hard; I am speaking now of the smaller sized farms.

4704. What becomes of their families; are they able to provide for them?—They turn out to service as soon as they have done their schooling; mostly to farmers, as being more suitable than anybody else for the work.

4705. They go out as labourers to farmers?—Yes, as farm-servants.

4706. Do they save money there?—Invariably.

4707. And afterwards do they try to follow their parents and become small farmers themselves?—Yes, I know many such cases.

4708. Are there any particular cases you want to call attention to?—I know more than one case where there are five farmers who have gone through that experience; and now they have each of them a farm of their own of about 40 or 50 acres; I know the men well, and it is a singular thing that one son of each family has been in my employment.

4709. Are they an intelligent lot of people?—Yes, they are hardworking and intelligent, and as useful people as any we have in the county; in fact, they are the backbone of the country.

4710. Are they educated?—Fairly; they can read and write and do a little figuring; not much more than that.

4711. Do any of them go into other pursuits besides farming?—The sons of small farmers mostly take to farming, unless they are a little brighter or more intelligent than the average; in that case they perhaps go to the towns.

4712. Do not a good number of them become ministers?—Not so many with us as in Cardiganshire. In Cardiganshire a great many of them become clergymen. With us some do; but it is more especially in Carnarvonshire than in my county that they become Nonconformist ministers and so forth.

4713. You have an instance, I think within your own knowledge, of one farmer who has brought up several of his sons to professional pursuits?

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Chairman—continued.

pursuits?—Yes; they were exceptionally bright boys.

4714. Would you just state the facts of that case?—That was the case of Owen Edwards; he had four sons; his farm was about 30 *l.* rent. His eldest son went to a village school first, and then to the Bala Grammar School, and then to the University College, Aberystwyth; he took his degree in London, and went to Oxford.

4715. What did he do there?—He took three prizes in three successive years.

4716. What is he doing now?—He is a tutor of Baliol and Corpus Christi, and a Fellow of Lincoln.

4717. How did this gentleman occupy his time during the vacation?—By helping his father on the farm.

4718. So that really he was working for his father at the same time that he was gaining these distinctions for himself?—He was.

4719. Now will you give the case of the second son?—He went through the same course, and is now going to Cambridge.

4720. He has already taken his degree, I think, at London University?—Yes.

4721. Are there any other children?—The youngest son is at the Grammar School at Bala, and another son is farming at home with his father.

4722. Has the father any occupation besides this farm?—He has nothing but the farming.

4723. He and his family have subsisted upon this farm of 30 *l.* a year?—Yes; and, in fact, upon a smaller one at one time.

4724. Now what is the effect of this consolidation of farms upon the rural population?—It has decreased the population in the rural parishes.

4725. Where have the people gone to?—They have gone to the villages and towns.

4726. Have you got any very small holdings in your district?—We have, of from three to six acres.

4727. In those cases, I suppose the cultivators follow some other occupation?—They do.

4728. Do you think that that is a good plan?—Very.

4729. These very small holdings are in the nature of allotments, I presume?—Yes. I do not mean to say that they came to the men as being allotments, but they are of the same class, the same size as allotments.

4730. They are large allotments really?—Yes, large.

4731. What is the average wage of farm labourers in your district?—Fifteen shillings a week, or its equivalent.

4732. Do you think that the small holder is at an advantage as compared with the labourer?—Certainly.

4733. How did the small holders do in the course of the recent agricultural depression as compared with the large ones?—I believe that they pulled through better.

4734. Are there any obstacles to the progress of small holders to which you wish to call attention?—Yes; the absence of security of tenure is one objection.

4735. Have rents been raised much in your part of the country?—Yes; during the last

Chairman—continued.

30 or 40 years they have been advanced considerably.

4736. Have they not been reduced in recent times?—They have not been reduced; but there has been an abatement of 10 per cent.

4737. Abatements have been made of 10 or 15 per cent., I understand?—Yes; but those have not been satisfactory.

4738. You think they are not equivalent to the increases which have been made in previous years?—No.

4739. But do the tenants in Wales make their own improvements?—Only occasionally.

4740. Generally it is the landlord who makes the improvement?—Generally the landlord; of course the tenant does sometimes.

4741. If the landlord makes the improvements, is he not justified in raising the rent?—Certainly, on that; but the rents have been raised for other reasons as well.

4742. Independent of any improvements made by the landlord?—Certainly. I understood when you used the word "improvements" to mean buildings and things of that sort; but there is not only that, because of course a tenant might improve his land by better farming.

4743. But does not he get compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Perhaps he may get it in future, he never has before.

4744. Are there any other complaints on the part of small holders which you wish to mention?—The game system is very objectionable; there is great trouble about that.

4745. You mean with regard to ground game?—The trouble has been with ground game.

4746. I thought that Sir William Harcourt had put an end to all trouble about that by the Hares and Rabbits Bill?—But if a landlord wants you to keep them, you must not kill them for all that, Sir William Harcourt or no Sir William Harcourt.

4747. How would you prevent the difficulty; how would you give the tenant the control over ground game that the Legislature tried to give him by the Hares and Rabbits Bill?—It is a difficult question.

4748. It is impossible, is it not, according to your view, where the tenant is under the control of the landlord, to secure him this advantage otherwise than by making him owner of the land?—Yes, if the landlord chooses to go on in that line.

4749. The tenant must be independent of his landlord if he is to have full control?—Yes. Of course, I do not mean to say that all landlords are inclined that way.

4750. Is there a great demand for small farms?—Very.

4751. What size farm do you say is the proper size for a small holder to sustain himself and his family upon, without any other occupation?—It varies according to the quality of the land; from 30 to 50 or 60 acres.

4752. Are there many small proprietors in Wales?—There are not.

4753. Have they been reduced in number?—I should say that they have been reduced.

4754. What is the difficulty with regard to small proprietors; why do not people get small

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Chairman—continued.

holdings by purchase?—The money is the difficulty.

4755. There is plenty of land to be had, is there not?—There has been considerable land on sale every few years ever since I remember; but if a man has not sufficient money himself he has to raise a mortgage of three-fourths or more upon it, and then the 4 per cent. interest kills him.

4756. Cannot he afford to pay 4 per cent. interest?—No.

4757. You are not aware are you, of any way by which under any system a man could raise money upon a loan of that kind for much less than 4 per cent. interest?—The reason is this: the land is sold by auction and other people, and run up so in price that whereas landlords are willing to take only 2 or 2½ or 3 per cent., if a man wants to buy he has to pay 4 per cent., and at the same cost as in the other case.

4758. The landlords are willing to rent their land at 2 or 2½ per cent., you say?—Yes.

4759. Whereas if a tenant wants to buy he has to pay 4 per cent.?—Four per cent. is the general rate of mortgage, I know a few cases perhaps where they go 5 *s.* less.

4760. If that demand continues you think that there would not be many people who would want to buy?—So far as I can see there would not.

4761. Even if holdings were offered by the local authority with an advance at 4 per cent., people would not be inclined to take them so long as they can get land to rent at 2½ per cent.?—That is quite true.

4762. You think they would not give the additional sum for the advantage of being owners of their own land, and being independent of any landlord?—They would not.

4763. I suppose you think it is desirable that small holdings should be increased as far as possible?—Certainly.

4764. Have you any suggestions to make for increasing the facilities for creating these smaller holdings?—I do not think I would disturb any sitting tenant; but when a farm became vacant and it was known that it could be profitably cut up into small holdings I would give power to the county council or some local authority.

4765. You would give them power to buy the land, and then to cut it up into small holdings?—Yes.

4766. When they have done that what are they to do; are they to sell to the tenants?—I rather think myself that they had better hold it themselves.

4767. And rent it to tenants?—Yes, rent it.

4768. But they would not be content with 2½ per cent., would they?—The point would be gained if it could be bought at a reasonable price; that is the difficulty.

4769. They would have to buy at the price in the market, would they not; that is your suggestion, as I understand?—I would not have it bought by auction at any rate.

4770. You mean that you would want to have a valuation?—I want to have a valuation.

4771. Would you give them compulsory powers?—Yes, compulsory powers to buy.

4772. And to buy at a valuation?—Yes.

4773. Who is to value the land?—That is a matter of settlement, I suppose; the way we

Chairman—continued.

settle these things is this, there is a man to value for each side, and then an umpire to settle.

4774. Supposing that one valuer were appointed for the owner, and one valuer for the corporation that bought, and an umpire chosen by them, do you think that the price given would be less than would be given at an auction for the land?—It ought to be at any rate.

4775. Have you had any experience of what local authorities have had to pay under a valuation of that kind?—I have heard of local authorities doing very bad sometimes in South Wales over things of that sort.

4776. Do you know that local authorities have had to pay half as much again as the property is worth under a system of valuation such as that?—That would be very serious. We must invent some better way than that, by all means.

4777. You have not any suggestions to make to the Committee as to any better way, I understand; all you want is to see the land purchased at a fair value?—At a fair value, and not a fictitious value; and I say it does fetch a fictitious value when put up to auction.

4778. All your suggestions as to the local authority depend upon the local authority being able to purchase at a fair value?—Yes.

4779. If they purchase at a fair value, you think that the tenant would be able to pay four per cent., or whatever is necessary, to prevent him from making a loss?—Yes. Small holders would be more likely to pay four per cent. than the holders of larger farms.

4780. But if the local authority were to do this they would have to put up buildings upon the farm, would they not?—They would.

4781. It would be rather expensive if the local authority did it, would it not?—Yes.

4782. Do you think that they would put them up as cheaply as you would put them up?—There is a tendency to jobbery in these things, certainly; but I do not know that we need be afraid of that.

4783. If they put up the buildings, and the buildings cost more than you would think to be right, would not it be difficult for the tenant to pay interest upon the outlay?—Yes, certainly.

4784. So that the success of the scheme would depend not only upon their getting the land at a fair price, but upon their putting up the buildings very cheaply?—Yes, upon their doing everything straight, and upon the best terms possible.

4785. Have you sufficient confidence in the local authority to trust them with all that in the country?—I believe that we could trust our local authority.

4786. You are a large ratepayer in your district, are you not?—Yes.

4787. You would have to pay for the loss, if the local authority made a loss in your case, would you not?—Yes.

4788. Would you consent to your local authority buying land, and cutting it up into small farms, and putting up buildings, and leasing it to tenants?—Yes; for I would have a voice in electing that local authority.

4789. You

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Chairman—continued.

4789. You would only have one voice, would you not?—Only one.

4790. Those people who wanted small farms would have an equal voice, would they not?—Yes, each of them.

4791. It would be their interest to get the thing as cheaply as possible?—Certainly.

4792. And they would not mind whether you lost by it or not?—No.

4793. Is it not possible that the people who did not mind whether you lost or not might be more numerous than the people who did, and if so it is those people who would return the local authority and not you?—They would be subject to rates as well as myself, after once they got possession.

4794. If they got all the profit of the scheme they would not mind paying a little extra in the rates, would they?—I cannot conceive a case going to such an extreme as you put it now.

4795. I do not want to press you about it, but I only ask you to tell me this, whether you would be willing as a ratepayer to take the risk of such a transaction?—I would be willing to try it as an experiment anyway.

4796. You would like to see the experiment made?—Yes.

4797. You think that the object is so good that you would like to try the experiment upon a small farm, and if it succeeded you would like to see it go further?—Yes.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

4798. Supposing your scheme was carried out and these small holdings had been created, I suppose that the cultivating owners would make their profits out of the things they sold off the farms?—Yes. When you say small holdings I make a difference between the small holdings and the small farms. A small holding I call a place of from two to ten acres; and I do not call a place a farm unless it is 30 acres and upwards.

4799. We will take first the cases of what you call small holdings, of 10 acres and under, they would make their profits, I suppose, out of what they sold, as well as what they got, for their livelihood?—I take it that these men would have other occupations in these small places, and that the small holdings would be an assistance to them to live.

4800. In the case of the small farms which you describe as consisting of 30 acres, the holders would make their profit to a large extent out of what they sold, I presume?—Yes; out of what they sold.

4801. They would sell it, of course, for the best price they could get?—Yes; the market price.

4802. You would have no objection to their selling the produce of their land at an auction?—No, certainly not.

4803. Then if it is right that a cultivating occupier should sell his produce at an auction, why do you object to a landowner being allowed to sell his land at an auction?—There is a tremendous difference.

4804. What is the difference?—First of all, the land is a limited quantity; you cannot increase it, but the produce you can increase; then secondly, nobody holds land but for beneficial

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

purposes. I maintain that no one has a private right to land as such.

4805. Do not you propose then that these small holdings should be held as private property?—No, I would not. I object to what Mr. Humphreys Owen said just now; I would not make these men into freeholders.

4806. I am sorry that I did not hear the commencement of your evidence; but I thought that I had understood enough since I had been in the room to gather that you propose that they should be freeholders?—No; I suggest that the local authority would let them out in small holdings. I am not going to create peasant proprietors.

4807. You propose that the holdings should be held by tenants under the local authority?—Yes, under the local authority.

4808. You draw a great distinction between the case of a landlord who wishes to sell his land, and the case of a tenant occupying that position who wishes to sell the produce?—Certainly.

4809. You think that the tenant ought to be allowed to sell the produce of the land for the best price he can get; but that the owner ought not to be allowed to sell the use of the land, except at a price which is to be fixed upon other terms than its market value?—You are trying to draw me rather near the precipice, and I do not want to fall over. There is a distinction, I believe, between the produce and the land; I do not know whether my English is sufficient to explain my meaning, but I maintain that there is a great distinction between the two, as I told you before. The quantity of your land is limited, but the quantity of produce that I produce from that land is, according to my labour and trouble and experience, and the success I have with it; while your land, according to your idea, might increase in value from other circumstances quite independent of anything you have done to your land.

4810. I suppose it is possible that the value of the produce of the land might also increase independently of anything that the owner had done to give value to that produce; is not that so?—Yes.

4811. Then, the distinction which you have drawn would fall to the ground, would it not?—That is only one instance; I might have another to give if I had a little time to consider; I did not think that this point would arise.

4812. I will not pursue that subject any further, but in regard to these holdings that you contemplate, some, I understand, were to be 10 acres, which you call small holdings, and others were to be small farms which you consider should be 30 acres?—Or above, according to the nature of the land.

4813. That is to say, if it was moderate land, of course the extent would have to be greater?—Yes.

4814. In regard to the small holdings to begin with, the 10-acre holdings, do you advocate the creation of small holdings of that character, excepting upon good land?—I would not recommend it upon very poor land.

4815. And with regard to the small farms of 30 acres, what do you say?—I believe those would be better on good land.

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

4816. Generally speaking then, what I understand is this, that you are in favour of a large creation of small holdings, ranging from about 10 acres?—Or smaller than that, less than 10 acres if it is good land.

4817. From five to 10 acres, should I say?—From three to six acres is my mark.

4818. I understand that although you see great advantages in increasing the number of small holdings where it is practicable, you would generally attach this condition to their creation, that it should be good land?—I certainly would not attach that condition, I would have it where it would be convenient to be had, and where you get willing sellers, without going to a very great expense; there would be many things of that sort that might affect it. For example, you might have one place where it was convenient to get it, but the land was not very good; I would rather have it even there if it is convenient.

4819. What I want to arrive at is this: judging from your experience and knowledge of the subject, do you think, that as a rule, it would answer or be desirable to go to any expense in creating these small farms of 30 acres if the land is not good?—I should say, better have it there than none at all, because they would improve the land gradually.

4820. However poor the land was to commence with?—Yes, however poor the land was to commence with, they would improve it gradually.

4821. Do you give this as your opinion, that on very poor land it would pay you to create a small farm of 30 acres, and to undergo all the necessary expense in buildings and other things that are necessary for the cultivation of that land?—I never said that. What I say is that if it is a small farm, if it is very good land, 30 acres would do; but if it is not equally good, if it is poor, you must have more land to get the same produce off.

4822. How much more land do you contemplate would be necessary in the case of bad land?—It depends so much upon the quality of the land, and the elevation.

4823. I mean taking very poor land?—My object in naming these amounts is that I do not believe a farm could be profitably cultivated unless it is of a size big enough to keep a man, and either a son or a servant and a pair of horses; at least one, or one and a pony, so that he can work it economically himself. On very good land, where it would be mostly tillage, 30 or 40 acres would sustain a man. But if it was side land and hilly he would have to have more land to keep himself and his horses. What I wish to point out is, that holdings, as a rule, between say six acres and those of a size that are not capable of keeping a horse, are not of any benefit to the farmer, because he has to keep a horse, and there is not enough work for them all, and the consequence is that the horse eats him up.

4824. That would apply to holdings of six acres, do you mean?—That would be holdings, say from 15 to 30 acres, or 10 to 30.

4825. Do you refer to poor land?—Poor or good of that size.

4826. I did not quite catch in what cases it was that the horse eat him up?—In a place of that size, whether it is good or bad; if it is too small a farm for a man to keep a horse, and keep him regularly employed, the horse will eat him up.

4827. That I understand; but you mention a small farm of six to 30 acres; I thought we were discussing the question of small farms which you yourself put at 30 acres if it was good land?—Yes.

4828. In that case the horse would not eat him up?—I call a small farm from 30 acres upwards.

4829. What I want to arrive at is this: supposing that the land is not good, but of the poorest description, what amount of land, in your opinion, would be sufficient to render it desirable to create a small holding, having regard to all the expenses which would be necessary for doing so?—It would require 60, 70, or up to 80 acres, according to the nature of the land, if it was poor land.

4830. Would your knowledge and experience upon the subject induce you to recommend to this Committee that where the land is very poor small holdings, even of the extent of 80 acres, should be created; if they were, do you think that it would be an economical and profitable arrangement?—No, I do not recommend anything of the sort.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4831. Do you find that there has been a tendency during the period of consolidation for the small holdings to become established rather on the hill-side and the good holdings on the low-lying good land?—Yes, mostly because it would be the good piece that would be taken and put to the other.

4832. Do you find that the tenants of many of these holdings on the hill-side do, as a matter of fact, improve the bad land?—Certainly.

4833. What is the process?—It is inclosed, pare, burnt, limed, ploughed, and grown oats on.

4834. Does that refer to a case of inclosing a part of the mountain side?—Yes, commons and mountain lands.

4835. With regard to the question which the Chairman asked you as to the working of this system of creating small holdings by means of local authorities, I think he asked you whether there would not be a danger in the fact that the majority of the voters would be people who would be anxious to get holdings that they would tax you as a large ratepayer unfairly; do you think from your experience of your neighbours in North Wales or of the small tenants generally that they would be likely to do that?—I do not apprehend any difficulty upon that point myself, and so I have never given it any thought previous to this.

4836. Do you think that they would be anxious to try this experiment, and that they would be very careful not to go into such an experiment rashly or foolishly?—I should say so, certainly.

4837. You think that there is a general desire that some experiments should take place in order, if possible, to extend the system of small holdings?—Certainly.

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

4838. The desire is strong also for obtaining for the present holders a somewhat better security of tenure?—Yes.

4839. Do you think yourself, from your own experience, that this is necessary and desirable in the interests of the present small holders?—I do.

4840. Do you not think that the question of game would be to some extent settled if they were secure in their farms?—Yes.

4841. Do you know many instances in which small holders have suffered very largely owing to this question of game?—Yes, I could point out instances.

4842. Have they been even ruined in many instances?—Yes; I was a creditor in a case where a man had made an assignment for the benefit of his creditors, and the debtor gave as a reason for his failure that he had been eaten up by game; we asked him, why did not the landlord pay for it, as it was given out he did; he said, "I have sent my bill there every year, but I never got a penny;" and the agent was there to hear him.

4843. Do you know many instances where small holders make very considerable improvements upon their farms in the way of fencing, draining, and even building, in some instances?—Yes; I have known instances of that sort.

4844. It is not uncommon in Merionethshire, is it?—No, it is not uncommon; it is not general either.

4845. Do you find that there is this complaint also, which was referred to by a previous witness, that the tenants in bidding for their farms when they are in the market, have to buy their own improvements and the fruit of their improvements?—I have known a case of that sort.

4846. Do you know cases where tenants have bidden, so to speak, against their better reason, in order to enable them to keep their home and the fruit of their improvements and the capital they have sunk in the land?—I have known that.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

4847. You said just now the small farms on very poor land were not likely to succeed; do you not think that if small farmers obtained this poor land at a very small rent they would be likely to improve it more than large farmers would?—What size do you mean?

4848. You were speaking of farms of about 30 acres; but with regard to small holdings generally, do not you think that the small holder improves the land more than the large holder, as a rule?—No, I do not see there is much difference there; I rather fancy that a bigger farmer would be the best if it was poor land.

4849. Do not the small farmers that you know of expend a great deal of labour upon their holdings?—They do.

4850. More so than the larger farmers?—Yes, in some instances on the very small holdings. I make a great distinction between a holding that is held by a man having another occupation, and holdidgs from that size up to an average farm.

4851. But the man who has a holding of a size sufficient to occupy him fully, surely expends upon that holding more labour than a large farmer, does he not?—It is very possible that he does; very likely.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

4852. You have just said, in reply to the honourable Member, that you thought a big farmer would do better for poor land than a small man?—Yes.

4853. How do you account for so much poor land going out of cultivation now?—It would be, of course, because it would not pay; it is too heavily rented, I expect.

4854. It would not pay either a big or a small farmer?—No.

4855. You think it would be no use where a big farmer has failed to put down a little farmer?—No; it is very possible that the little man might succeed.

4856. Than I am afraid I did not understand your answers; I understand you to say that in your opinion a big man with large means would do better on poor land than a small farmer?—That is where we misunderstood one another. I maintain that on poor land the larger farmer ought, at all events, to be able to farm it better by looking at it.

4857. By putting his money into it, I suppose you mean?—Yes; and working it.

4858. Chiefly you think because the larger farmer has the money, he would have a better chance of making it pay?—Yes.

4859. Supposing it were proposed in some place such as Essex, or other parts of the country, that where poor land has gone practically out of cultivation to put down a number of Welsh small holders, do you think that would be likely to pay?—I think it would be more likely to pay than your large holdings; there would be perhaps 400 or 500 acres I understand. What I was talking of would be 70 to 100 acres; that is what I mean by a large farm; I mean large in that sense; I did not compare it to such large farms as that.

4860. I was asking upon rather as to the condition of the land; I want to get clear from you how it is that you think that a big farmer can do better on poor ground than a small farmer, and yet say that a large farmer goes out; you would be in favour of putting a small one in his place?—I am afraid there has been some misunderstanding between us all along.

4861. I will not pursue it further. Have you ever been a small holder yourself?—No.

4862. Are you a tenant farmer?—Yes.

4863. With 300 acres?—Yes.

4864. Do you follow any other business besides?—I do a little.

4865. What is it?—I am a miller and corn factor.

4866. Do you know Mr. Hughes who gave evidence here?—I do not.

4867. I may tell you that he was speaking as to his views and what he thought was for the good of the neighbourhood not very far from where you live, and he suggested that it would be a good thing to cut up any farm above the size of 60 or 70 acres for the benefit of the neighbourhood; do you agree with him?—No.

4868. You would not like your own farm of 300 acres to be cut up?—No.

4869. Supposing that the local authority in your neighbourhood said, "We want some more small holdings; here is a suitable place on Mr. Jones's land; as a member of the local board, I understand, you would not agree to their com-

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

pulsorily taking that land?—If I had recommended it, I should certainly stick to what I said.

4870. But would you recommend it?—I should recommend it in certain instances.

4871. But you would not recommend it in your own instance, I understand?—I did not say that.

4872. Are you in favour of the compulsory taking of land, which in your opinion is suitable to be cut up into small holdings?—In certain cases I am.

4873. In what cases?—In cases where the land would be unlet.

4874. I should hardly call that taking it; you mean that you would take an empty farm?—Yes.

4875. Supposing that in the case of your local authority there was a great demand for small holdings, you would at once set about obtaining land to cut up and portion out, would you not?—I do not believe in any sudden changes with us in England.

4876. Are you in favour of compulsory taking land for the formation of small holdings?—In some cases I am.

4877. In what cases?—In cases where there is a change of tenant, or in the case where a farm is unlet.

4878. You mean a compulsory purchase, of course?—Yes, a compulsory purchase.

4879. But you would not touch a man in possession?—Not for the present.

4880. Supposing that a landlord had a farm on his hands, would you compulsorily take it?—Yes; or in that case if he preferred it I would advise the local authority to lend him the money to cut it up.

4881. In any case where a landlord was farming a desirable piece of land, would you take his farm?—No.

4882. Not under any circumstances?—I would not take it from him any more than I would from a tenant, I would do just the same in either case.

4883. You stated just now that one of the chief objections to the present system was the insecurity of tenure; what instances can you tell us of from your own experience of insecurity of tenure of small holdings, 50-acre farms and so on?—I have known of men being capriciously turned away without any excuse at all; they would not acknowledge that they had any reason at any rate.

4884. To whom do you mean they would not acknowledge?—They would not acknowledge to the public why the man was turned off.

4885. Were they asked to give their reason?—No, I suppose not.

4886. Why should they give a reason?—When a man is turned out of a farm the country wishes to know the reason why. These cases have generally followed an election.

4887. You attribute the insecurity of tenure a good deal to elections, do you?—No; it is the evictions which I attribute to that, not the insecurity of tenure.

4888. But what sort of evictions have taken

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

place in your neighbourhood?—Farmers have been turned away from their farms.

4889. You have already said that you do not know what the reasons were; but I presume reasons might be given. Can you imagine any reason that would induce a landlord to change his tenant, or let a farm go out of cultivation, besides simply the gratification of turning out somebody who had voted the wrong way, in his opinion?—Yes; I know some landlords have been inclined to turn tenants away, because they are Dissenters, to weed them out.

4890. Are landlords in your part in such an independent position that they can afford to part with a tenant at any time?—I do not think it has paid, but they have tried it.

4891. How many instances have you known of men being turned out in that way?—I have known a great many instances of men being turned out on account of elections; and of farms being let to Churchmen in preference to Dissenters, I have known many instances; and I have known it preached publicly by a land agent that it was the duty of every landowner in Wales to expel every Dissenter from his land.

4892. I gather you do not like landowners?—I do. I do not believe that there is such an admirer of landlords in the room as I am.

4893. Are you a landlord as well as a tenant?—I am not. I am under a good landlord. It is of the bad ones I speak. I am under one of the best landlords in England.

4894. Have you taken any part in any of the work of local authority on the board of guardians or anything of that sort?—I have gone through them all.

4895. Have you any experience of borrowing money under the Sanitary Authority Act?—I know what the Bala Local Board have done for the Bala Waterworks.

4896. What did they borrow at?—I cannot remember now. I was not a member of the board then.

4897. Was that a parish improvement?—It was water for the town of Bala.

4898. That is the urban sanitary authority?—Yes.

4899. Have you any experience of borrowing money under a rural sanitary authority?—I have had no experience of that.

4900. You are a member of the County Council, I believe?—Yes.

4901. It is early days; but have you as yet had any application to put the compulsory powers of the Allotments Act into force?—No.

4902. Are you likely to have?—Ultimately I daresay we shall; but not at present.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

4903. With regard to this small holding which grew these distinguished graduates at the University of Oxford, the rental was 30 *l.* a year, I understand; do you know what the acreage was?—That was poor land, and I expect the acreage would be perhaps 50 or 60 acres, with a mountain attached, perhaps. I could not tell.

4904. Have you any idea what the income of the tenant would be?—No, I have not; but I know

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

know that those boys supported themselves while they were at college.

4905. By their own labour on the farm?—First of all by supporting themselves at home, and then going to college; they are exceptional cases, of course.

4906. You say that 30 to 60 acres of land would usually sustain a man without any other occupation?—Yes.

4907. What is you estimate of the gross produce per acre of such a holding of between 30 and 60 acres?—For a farm, of say 40 acres, the gross produce ought to be upwards of 120*l.*

4908. £. 3 an acre?—Yes.

4909. What profit would the man have to live upon there?—He would not make much profit.

4910. He would live upon it?—Yes.

4911. And pay his expenses?—Yes.

4912. And pay his rent?—Yes, he would pay his rent well. I take it that there would be 40*l.* for rent.

4913. That is 1*l.* an acre?—Yes, taking ordinary land; then there would be another 1*l.* an acre for expenses, and so forth; and then he would have the other 40*l.* to live upon.

4914. Then there are three equal portions; 1*l.* per acre for rent, 1*l.* for cultivation, and 1*l.* for himself?—Yes; that is what I have always heard said.

4915. Then the position of a man, with a small holding of 40 acres, would be better than an agricultural labourer with 15*s.* a week?—Yes.

4916. Much better?—Much better. He would be independent, and he could do as he liked.

4917. And he could live better too, I suppose?—Yes; then again in the 120*l.*, I do not put anything on for what he has consumed himself in bread, butter, milk, and so forth.

4918. Do you mean that he lives, besides making 1*l.* an acre for himself?—I have not calculated anything as to the produce of the farm.

4919. Then do you say he could almost live rent free, and live out of the products of his farm, and make 1*l.* an acre as well?—What I say is this: that in calculating it at 120*l.*, I have not included what he has eaten himself of the produce of the land.

4920. How much might that be worth per acre, do you think; what would the family consume?—It is very difficult to say, he has given service instead of it.

4921. Would it be almost equivalent to an agricultural labourer's wage?—Yes.

4922. Practically he would get nearly 1*l.* 15*s.* per acre off the farm, 15*s.* would be consumed, and there would be 1*l.* profit, would there not?—No; he himself has not consumed 15*s.* The labourer does not consume 15*s.* himself, it goes to his family and children; so that I maintain that in the case of the farmer you cannot put it that he would get as much as 1*l.* 15*s.*

4923. But you said he would get the milk and other products from the farm, and 1*l.* an acre as well?—Yes, that is for himself and his wife, his daughter perhaps, and his son.

4924. And have 1*l.* an acre profit?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

4925. He would be twice as well off as an agricultural labourer?—Yes, he would.

4926. You said that the average wage of the agricultural labourer was 15*s.*?—Yes.

4927. What is the maximum wage that they get?—I do not know of any agricultural labourers getting more than 17*s.* or 18*s.* a week.

4928. Are they guaranteed constant employment?—Yes, I expect I give as high wages as anybody in yonder district. I give the head man 17*s.* a week; and I give a house, and he keeps a cow, but that is not exactly rent free, but I consider it equal to 18*s.* a week.

4929. Will they get that all the year?—Yes, all the year round.

4930. And more at harvest-time?—No, they would not get any more at harvest-time.

4931. Now with regard to the acquisition of land by the local authority, you are not afraid that tenants of these small holdings would do you any injustice?—I never apprehended any danger from them.

4932. You trust the people entirely?—I would not trust them in dealing with them.

4933. But I mean you would trust them with that power?—Yes. I do not believe that they would try to do harm to me any more than I would try to do harm to them.

4934. You believe that they would do justice to the tenants, and justice to the landlords, and justice in making the assessment?—Yes, they would require a little looking after, as all of us do.

4935. Would you trust to the wisdom of the local authority to acquire property that they thought was necessary?—Yes.

4936. You were asked a question just now as to whether it would be wise to take for these small holdings land that was poor as well as land that was rich; I take it you would trust to the wisdom of the local authority to discriminate between the land which should be taken, and you would leave the authority to judge whether it was rich enough to be worked with advantage?—Certainly.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

4937. You, apparently, do not think much of abatements of rent; but I suppose there might be many cases in which a landlord would give an abatement, but would not be able to afford to give a reduction?—You must remember that in speaking to-day I am speaking the views of the general farmers and not exactly of my own feelings.

4938. I should very much prefer to have your own opinion; you would think, would you not, that there must be many cases in which a landlord could give an abatement, but might not be able to afford to give a reduction of the rent where he has been making the improvements?—Yes. I know cases of that sort. What I stated was that giving abatements of 10 or 15 per cent. has not satisfied the country, but that the farmers complain about it.

4939. Perhaps you never thought that it might be very difficult for the landlord to do more than give an abatement where he has done the improvements in the way I have described?

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

—It is very possible that there are some in that position.

4940. If the quantity of a man's land is limited, as compared with the produce, he might naturally expect to do the best he could if the land were sold; you would think so, would you not?—Yes.

4941. Granted that it is very desirable to increase the number of small holdings, do you see no hardship in the owner of the land being compelled to part with his land, and to part with it at a moderate price also; has it ever occurred to you that if you owned land you might in the first place dislike having it taken from you compulsorily, and if you had to part with it compulsorily you would like, at any rate, to get the best price you could for it?—Certainly.

4942. In the cases you contemplate of compulsorily taking of land you contemplate that the landlord should not be permitted to sell it by auction, but that he should part with it at a moderate price in some way or other?—Yes, it

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

ought to be so, for this reason: I believe that the man who works and cultivates the land ought to be paid first; the same as it is in everything else.

4943. If you owned land, would you be willing to have it taken from you compulsorily; would you be willing to be forbidden to sell it by auction; and would you be content to be compelled to part with it at at a moderate price?—In selling land to a railway company as they do now, I understand it is sold compulsorily, and I fancy they are obliged to take a moderate price for it.

4944. Is it not the case that when the land is sold compulsorily a very large price is got for it?—I have no experience of valuing for that sort of work.

4945. If you owned land yourself would you think it fair it should not only be taken from you, but it should be taken at a moderate price?—It is very possible, if I were a landowner, that I should feel like a landowner.

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Wednesday, 29th May 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Halley Stewart.

MR. JOHN COMPTON LAWRANCE, IN THE CHAIR.

Major PATRICK GEORGE CRAIGIE, F.S.S., F.R.G.S., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

4946. YOU are the Secretary of the Central Chamber of Agriculture?—I am.

4947. And the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Statistical Society?—I am one of the honorary secretaries.

4948. And you were Joint Reporter of the Special Committee formed at Rome in 1887 of the International Statistical Institute?—Yes, along with Monsieur De Foville of the French Ministry of Finance, I was appointed Joint Reporter for the International Committee on Land and Agricultural Statistics.

4949. And I think you have represented the Agricultural Department of the Privy Council in the Conference at Rome?—Yes, I represented them on that occasion. I should perhaps explain to the Committee that in consequence of some suggestions made in a paper which I read at the Statistical Society, shortly before that Conference, the International Institute appointed a Committee on which representatives of Russia, America, France, Italy, Germany, and Great Britain, were placed to consider the whole question of harmonising the statistics in relation to landed property, the division of landed property, and the mode of its utilisation. I have with me a copy of the interim report from that Committee adopted on my motion at Rome.

4950. I believe you have made a study of the subject of the size of agricultural holdings?—I have endeavoured to do so, so far as the very imperfect returns which we possess, both in this country and in other countries, have permitted.

4951. I think you also visited the markets of Paris and Brussels, as a Special Commissioner under the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls?—Yes. Last summer I was deputed by Lord Derby, the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls, to visit both Paris and Brussels, with a view of reporting on certain questions connected with the administration of the markets, and the mode of selling stock in the markets; and necessarily, as an incident of that inquiry, I was led to inquire what were the food-providing districts of those two great cities.

Chairman—continued.

4952. That is to say, the sources of supply of those markets?—Yes; and in that capacity I also received numerous official papers, indicating what were the classes of native and foreign food sold in those markets, and their places of production.

4953. I think that last autumn you were sent by the Agricultural Department of the Privy Council to inquire into, and report upon, the agricultural schools of France?—Yes; I was directed by the Lord President to proceed to France, to inquire into the system of agricultural education there. I spent some little time in France in the autumn, and made a report, which has been presented to Parliament. During that inquiry I was brought into communication with a number of persons interested in agriculture, and in the possession of the most recent statistics, both in reference to the system of agricultural education and the small farm system of France.

4954. Have you personally visited and seen the system of farming in France, Italy, Belgium, the United States, and Canada?—Yes; I have on several occasions visited different parts of France; more slightly, I have also visited some of the small farm districts of Italy and Belgium. I have also seen something of other agricultural localities; and, five years ago, I made rather an extended visit to the United States and Canada; so that I have had an opportunity of seeing the antithesis of the small culture on some of the great farms of the west, and over the ranching and cattle districts. My great object, I should say, in that examination was to have the means of being able to interpret the statistics, by seeing, personally, what each class of farm was, and what the figures one was familiar with in reports really meant in practice.

4955. Are you also familiar with the conditions of agriculture in this country?—Yes; in connection with the work of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, of which I have been secretary for the last 10 years, I have had many opportunities of meeting agriculturists from all parts of the country; and I have myself visited most parts of the country. I originally began

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Chairman—continued.

my knowledge of agricultural matters in Scotland, my own country, in which I lived for the first 20 years of my life. I know Scotch farming, both in the high lands and in the low lands, pretty well. In North Yorkshire I have both farmed and managed estates, and I have frequently resided in Lincolnshire. I am, therefore, familiar both with the large farm system of Lincolnshire and with the peculiar small farm system on the east coast of Lincolnshire rather than in the Isle of Axholme, which is usually quoted. I may say that there are very few counties of England which I have not had occasion to visit; therefore I know something of their local conditions.

4956. And you have been in constant communication, as secretary of the Agricultural Chamber, with farmers in the country?—I am continually in communication with farmers generally.

4957. Have you had your attention drawn to the Reference to this Committee?—Yes, I have seen the Reference to this Committee, and it appears to me that there seems to be two questions prominently in that Reference; one of fact, and one of policy. The question of fact appears to me (perhaps you will correct me if I am wrongly interpreting the reference) as to whether there has been an actual diminution of small holders and of cultivators of land. I felt a little uncertain as to whether these two classes were meant to be separate classes, meaning by the small owners the actual possessors of the soil, and by the cultivators of the land small tenants. I was not quite certain, and therefore, in preparing some notes for this Committee, while taking note of both classes, I have chiefly confined my attention to the second class rather than to the first, and for this reason: that I can find very few reliable statistics of the number of owners, although, of course, I can meet with many impressions and expressions of opinion; but as regards the cultivators of the land there really are some data on which we may go, on the point of fact. Then again the Reference to the Committee seems to include the question of policy, as to whether legislative facilities should be recommended for the creation of small holdings where they do not now exist.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4958. May I ask what you understand by policy; do you include the social national advantages as well as the economic advantages of production?—I should distinctly define the policy as resting on both grounds: namely, the economic question and the social question as distinct from the economic question.

Chairman.

4959. I understand that you have divided these points in the Reference, I do not think unfairly, into the question of fact; that is to say whether in recent years there has been any diminution in the number of small holdings; and the question of policy; that is to say, whether facilities for the creation of small holdings can

Chairman—continued.

be extended?—Those are the points into which I thought of dividing the inquiry.

4960. And your evidence will be given separately upon those two points?—Yes, but mainly on the first. But I wish to point out that I find another difficulty with reference to the words in the Reference, whether "in recent years" there has been any diminution, because those words, of course, would require a very different statistical inquiry if we mean by "recent years" within the last 10 years, or within the last 20 years, or within the last 100 years. I am not quite certain what the intention of the Committee is on that point, but with reference to the longer period I should like to say, in order to clear the ground for other evidence, that I have no evidence of a statistical character which I can offer with regard to the longer period, or contrasting the number of cultivators now with the number of cultivators 100 years ago. My evidence, of course, being of a statistical character only dates from the commencement of something like reliable statistics as to the cultivation of the land.

4961. Then I understand you to say that so far as regards the question of fact, that is to say, whether there has been a diminution or not in the number, there are no reliable statistics, until what time do you say?—As regards the number of owners, I am not prepared to say that there are any reliable statistics in existence at the present time at all. On that point perhaps you will allow me to refer to the authority usually quoted, the New Domesday Book; that seems to be the only record of owners as owners which we possess. That is taken, as of course the Committee are well aware, mainly from the entries in the rate books, the parochial rate books; and those rate books are notoriously, as regard the owners' column, in a most imperfect condition. I have made many attempts, as many other persons have, to analyse these returns of 1871, which are known by the name of the New Domesday Book; but I have not been able to form a very distinct impression on account of the very great number of errors which, to my own knowledge, crop up in the examination of those returns.

Sir *George Campbell.*

4962. How low does this New Domesday Book go; I think it hardly goes so low as the small holdings that we are concerned with?—It gives the number and the aggregate area and value of holdings under one acre; and then it distinguishes all above. If read by the light of the Returns, moved for by the late Mr. Bright, analysing the holdings in counties in groups according to size, the data would be very interesting if the figures abstracted in groups of holdings were themselves reliable; but my information, so far as it goes, tends to throw great doubt on the original figures in the Blue Book, and, therefore, the analyses cannot themselves be relied upon as giving accurate statistics.

4963. Is it not the case that the New Domesday Book gives no particulars of holdings under 100 acres, so that it is impossible to distinguish between villas and agricultural holdings?—The complete figures are given as I have explained, but the

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

the result of the book is very well summarised, if I may refer to it for a moment, in a volume which is pretty well known on this question by Mr. Brodrick on "English Land and English Landlords," in the pages of which specimens are given showing how the land is divided, and of what size the estates in the various counties are. You can find from the acreage returns of the Blue Book what number of holdings of different sizes exist, and those returns moved for by Mr. Bright give the analyses in thirteen groups.

4964. Do they distinguish a 20-acre farm from a 20-acre villa?—No, there would be no such distinction; the use of the land is not gone into, but merely the question of area and rental. I ought to say, however, that I should not like to offer any very confident evidence on these books, for the reason I have stated, that the initial step of the preparation of the owner's column in the rate book is almost always defective in English parishes, the reason of that being that our local rates are collected (unlike rates in Scotland and Ireland) from the occupiers only; there is no collection from the owners and no recognition of the owners; even in the case of our Imperial taxation, the income tax assessment, which ought to be the most exhaustive, but to which we cannot trust for an analysis of the owners of land, is simply collected from the occupier who deducts the tax from his rent; and, therefore, the entries appear, not under the name of the owner, but primarily under the name of the occupier who pays the tax. With regard to Schedule B. of the Income Tax, I have been furnished by the Inland Revenue Office with their return of separate properties assessed under Schedule B. These will be useful, as I propose to use them a little further on, for the particular purpose of showing whether there has been an increase or a diminution of such separately assessed properties; but they will not indicate whether there have been a greater or less number of owners possessing those properties.

Chairman.

4965. I understand you to say that there are no reliable data which would throw a light upon that question of the diminution in the number of owners?—There are no reliable data; but I think that on that point perhaps I may be allowed to mention the general impression that there has been some diminution over a considerable period, though I myself am disposed, from such evidence as I have been able to collect in limited areas, to question this diminution around towns, and in particular parts of the country where apparently there has been a comparative breaking up of ownership in recent years. On the point of the farming of land by its owners I have some tables which I am anxious to explain to the Committee.

4966. I should like to ask you a question upon that. You say that you have tables showing that the small holdings round town have increased; does that show whether that has been for the purpose of building only, or for agricultural purposes?—The tables mentioned do not refer to that. I prefaced that remark by stating there was a general impression of diminution, and that in the other case it was from personal observation only I doubted this round towns. The tables which I am anxious to produce are really with reference to the number of separate occupations to which I referred a few minutes ago. I fancy that the question of obtaining a record of the ownership returns is one which would almost come within the reference to this Committee. It is desirable to have such returns as we do not now possess with regard to the holding of land in this country. This matter has been brought very forcibly under my notice on the committee at Rome two years ago. It was recommended by that committee that the members representing the different agricultural departments should endeavour to induce statisticians, where the statistics were not now thus collected, to obtain accurate statistics showing the division of the land, the cohesion or dispersion of properties (I am translating the report which is in French, only giving the purport of it), in order to show how much land is held by individual proprietors, and how many different domains or estates are possessed in particular districts. That this subject should be kept entirely apart and distinct from the other inquiry as to the employment of the soil; but that inquiry should also be made into that part of the subject, showing the division of the agricultural territory, and the modes of agriculture practised; and further, that a third return to enable the question to be clearly understood, was necessary, giving the number of what we call in this country holdings (the French word is *exploitations*) or farms, quite distinct from the question of ownership, with regard to the agricultural management, and to distinguish the mode in which those farms were held; whether they were farmed directly by their owners (*faire valoir direct*), or whether by tenant farmers (*fermage*), or whether by a mixed system of *métayage*, which is common in parts of the Continent. I might suggest, perhaps, if I may be allowed to do so to the Committee, that in order to determine the question of the reference it seems to me that we require very much fuller returns upon all those points than we now possess.

Chairman—continued.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4967. Can you give the title of the Report from which you have just quoted?—It is published in the "Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statisque" for 1887; if necessary, I can put in the Report (*handing in the same*). I wish to suggest also that, as we are now approaching in this country the completion, I hope we may say approaching the completion, of our extensive Ordnance survey, some combination of our fiscal returns, with that survey itself, might be effected, so that we could have a really accurate record of the numbers of owners of land in this country, whether for taxing purposes or for general economic information; and, perhaps, in connection with what has been suggested, I think, by some witnesses before the Committee, an extended system of compulsory registration of land would in another way have the same result; it would enable us to have figures upon which we could base conclusions.

 4968. I understand

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Chairman.

4968. I understand then that, at the present time, no such figures exist that would give a fair basis for calculation?—No such figures exist except as bearing upon the question of the occupation of the land, not with regard to ownership.

4969. Which are, of course, fallacious?—Yes.

4970. I think that you have another return which has been prepared at your suggestion?—With regard to the question of the farming of land by its owners, the annual agricultural returns for the last two years have contained a return which I suggested in the paper to which I have made reference before as read in 1887. That special return now shows (although I think the matter is not very generally known) the number of occupiers who farm land which they themselves possess in this country. It has been rather a difficult return to compile; but by means of a single line of addition to the usual agricultural returns, the Government are now able to state, besides the acreage, the number of acres that are occupied by the persons who actually own them. This return is given in the yearly Buff Book that is presented to Parliament, and therefore I have taken some trouble to analyse it county by county myself, and the result I might give generally to the Committee, as I think this bears on the subject before the Committee.

4971. If you please?—There are at the present time in England 60,935 occupiers who own the land which they are farming. The total number of occupiers returned, or perhaps I may be allowed to correct the term, and say the total number of returns that are made (for I always have some corrections to make with regard to the word "occupier"), is 425,886, and as I said just now, of those 60,935 refer to plots of land which were owned by the persons farming them. There are also 19,442 returns from persons who hire land as well as own it.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4972. Are you speaking of England only?—Yes.

4973. England and Wales?—No, England only. In all those returns it is very essential not to combine England and Wales, or England and Wales with Scotland, for reasons which I will explain further on. I take England by itself, and divide it also into four distinct districts which the Government have allowed now for produce returns; they call them the produce districts. I find in the first produce district of England, which consists of the chief corn-growing counties in the east of England, namely, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex, Herts, Beds, Hunts, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and the East Riding of Yorkshire, there are 16·6 per cent. of the whole of the returns sent in which represent land exclusively farmed by the persons who own it; and I have also worked out the acreage results, which are of course more important than the numbers to some extent, and I find that practically 19 per cent. of the area of the land in those nine counties is now farmed by its owners; that is to say 1,167,145 acres, out of a total acreage of

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

6,190,481. I have done the same for each of the divisions, and if it would be interesting to the Committee I would put in this Table completely.

Chairman.

4974. I think it is most important?—These tables have not been published; I should say that they are simply results deduced from Returns in the Buff Books of the Government (*handing in the same*).

Sir *George Campbell.*

4975. Does your Return show how much of that land is held by small owners as distinguished from that held by large owners?—It does not. I should, perhaps, in consequence of the question which the honourable Member has put to me, like to say that this Return has only been in existence for two years, and since it has been in existence the Return, which is quinquennially made in this country of groups of holdings, large and small, has not been taken, but occasion will arise next year, in 1890, for again taking what is called the quinquennial census of the mode in which the land is held; it was taken in 1875, in 1880 and 1885, and will be due again in 1890; and the suggestion which I am making to the department (and if the department is strengthened, there is some expectation of its being done), is that it is very important that we should have these figures analysed, in order to show what proportion of those owners of farms are large owners, and which are small. I also find that the return differs so enormously between county and county that some reason must be behind it; and in some cases, undoubtedly, that reason is to be sought in the land thrown on the owner's hands, on a very large scale in some counties. For instance, I take at random the figures before me, and I find that in Hampshire there seems very nearly 30 per cent. of the acreage now farmed by its owners according to these returns; that in Surrey, which is not so surprising on account of the large amount of land held for something other than agricultural purposes strictly speaking, there is no less than 35 per cent. in acres farmed by persons who own them; whereas in other counties, such as Cambridgeshire, there is only 18 per cent.; in the East Riding of Yorkshire, barely 12 per cent.; in Dorset not much over 10 per cent.; and in Shropshire not much over 9 per cent. In Cheshire, which is a county very largely filled with small farms, you have only 8 per cent. of the acreage in the hands of its owners.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

4976. What is there in Norfolk?—In the county of Norfolk the number returned by the owners is nearly 14 per cent.; but the acreage so farmed is 19 per cent.; that is to say, that the case of Norfolk is exactly the average of all the east of England.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4977. Then this will be put in?—Yes; those returns are prepared for the Committee; perhaps I may simply read to the Committee the general results in acreage.

4978. If

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Chairman.

4978. If you please?—The general results are these: In England, 16 per cent. of the land is according to this return farmed by its owners; in Wales, 11 per cent.; in Scotland rather less than 13 per cent.; making for Great Britain an average of 15 per cent. of the acreage, or something under 5,000,000 acres out of 32,700,000 acres. Taking the case of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, which are very exceptional, the Isle of Man has nearly 36 per cent. of its area farmed by its owners; Jersey has 40 per cent., Guernsey has 60 per cent. The figures for Ireland I should say are not prepared in this form. The figures for Great Britain, taken without the Channel Islands, as I read before, show that Great Britain has 15 per cent. of its area farmed by its owners.

Sir *George Campbell.*

4979. As Scotland has been mentioned, you are aware that in Scotland the returns give ample opportunity for distinguishing between large and small owners?—The returns undoubtedly do with regard to Scotland. I have not analysed the figures for Scotland, I have only taken the totals; but I should like to point out to the Committee that these should be taken, as all agricultural returns relating to Scotland must be taken, with the great and important qualification that only the land which is returned in our agricultural return every year as cultivated land is taken account of at all; therefore, the figures with regard to the surface of Scotland are entirely defective, because only 25 per cent. of the whole area of Scotland is accounted for at all. In England it is quite different, because the amount of cultivated land much more nearly approximates to the total surface.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4980. That is to say, that all the mountain land is left out in Scotland?—All the mountain land or hill pasture grass other than the grass returned, which is a very small amount, is left out; and on that point I wish to call special attention to this serious defect in the Scotch returns.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4981. Does that apply to Wales as well?—Yes, and to certain English counties, such as Northumberland. I have here a statement which I have not prepared for putting in, but I think it bears upon the question just put to me. For my own information, some years ago, I made out a return showing exactly what amount of the surface of the country was accounted for in our agricultural returns. I find that, as regards England, three-fourths of the whole land is analysed and accounted for in those returns, the balance being the uncultivated hill land, and of course the land covered with water, land covered by railways, and towns and land built upon generally. In Wales not quite 60 per cent. of the whole surface is accounted for in the Agricultural Returns; therefore a much larger percentage remains unaccounted for; although in the case of Wales, that so-called uncultivated land carries stock, and that is one of the difficulties that I brought under the notice of the International

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

Committee at Rome. And the same difficulty has occurred in other countries; I believe in Austria. I think that in the Swedish and in the Russian Returns (so far as I have been able to deal with them), they are very largely affected by the same difficulty. The productive land, and the agriculturally-cultivated land, are not exactly the same. A large portion of the forests in some foreign countries is included in the productive lands, and in other countries is excluded from the Agricultural Returns. In Scotland, only 24·9 per cent. of the whole surface, or one-fourth part, is included in the Returns; whereas a very large proportion of the stock in Scotland is carried upon land which is not accounted for in the returns, and is not in the Holdings Returns divided into farms.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4982. But in the Government returns the stock kept on the farm, the stock kept on those lands, is not accounted for?—I made it my duty specially to investigate that with the Agricultural Department, and they have furnished me with the form of return sent out. Every tenant must enter both "the number of live stock in possession of or upon the land in the occupation of the undersigned" on a given day. Therefore, all the sheep in the possession of every man who receives the return are entered, although only the land which he cultivates, in the limited sense of the returns, is returned; and the tables, on page 103 of the Agricultural Returns for 1886 are misleading, unless they are read with the qualification in the Report, which has certainly been made by the officers of the department on each occasion of the quinquennial surveys. Sheep and other stock taken into graze, or kept upon grass land hired by the season, or kept upon heath moor or mountain land, is to be returned by their owners. It seems too that stock sent to fairs, markets, or elsewhere for sale, upon the 4th day of June, or previous day, should be included in this return by the owners of such stock; but as the general governing words are the total number of live stock in possession of, as well as on the land of, any occupier, the whole stock of Scotland is included in returns, although, when we come to analyse the returns, that stock is unfortunately apportioned to the much smaller acreage of cultivated holdings.

4983. That is to say, if a Scotch farmer has a 200-acre farm, and besides that he has 1,000 acres of mountain land, he only makes a return of the 200-acre farm, but he returns all the sheep he keeps on the 1,000-acre mountain land?—That is so, undoubtedly.

4984. Then to that extent the returns of the Agricultural Department are misleading?—They require amendment undoubtedly. That is one of the points that I have frequently urged; and in a paper before the Statistical Society I drew special attention to the point, and I have consulted both the Agricultural Department upon the matter, and also Mr. Giffen, who was formerly in charge of the returns when they were at the Board of Trade. There is no doubt the returns, if they are read by themselves without the explanation given in the annual reports, which are made as a preface to the returns, are misleading

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

with regard to Scotland, Wales, and parts of certain English counties, because they do not deal exhaustively with the whole of the surface, whereas they do deal exhaustively with all the stock.

4985. That would not apply so much to England and Wales, would it?—No; therefore in this paper of mine I entirely confine the investigation with regard to holdings to England alone, because the data is so much closer there.

4986. That I say would not apply so much to England and Wales?—The difficulty indicated would arise with Wales constantly; because, as I have said, only 60 per cent. of the area is accounted for; 40 per cent. is mountain, heath, or otherwise unaccounted for.

4987. Will the discrepancy arise with England to any great extent?—In the case of England there is one-fourth part of the surface not accounted for, but that is very largely the result of land occupied for other purposes than agriculture; therefore the discrepancy is not so great in regard to England. In many counties, for instance in Cambridgeshire, 90 per cent. of the whole surface is accounted for; in the East Riding of Yorkshire 80 per cent. is accounted for. Then in a county like Surrey, where there is a great deal of waste land (which is much the same as Wales), only 59 per cent. is accounted for. But, if we go to Leicestershire it is nearly 90 per cent.; in Oxfordshire it is 87 per cent., and so on.

4988. When you speak of landowners who occupy the land, do you include those landowners who have farms thrown on their hands, and do you include landowners who farm land in various counties by means of bailiffs and so forth, and are not occupiers in the sense of cultivating farmers, but who are nominally tilling their land, and who probably have very little personal relation with it, and do it all by means of bailiffs, and who might see very little of it themselves?—Undoubtedly the returns which I have spoken of refer to the whole land of the country; and no doubt the line which is given in this return, land rented and occupied, land owned and occupied, and total number of acres, will make it essential that all the land owned by the person making the return if he occupies it shall be returned, whether he owns it and farms it willingly as the owner of the land, or whether it is thrown on his hands for want of cultivators, no distinction is made in the return, and, economically speaking, I do not think there is any distinction. In the case of the French return, which I will deal with afterwards, the distinction is carefully made as to the holdings directly farmed by the owner. The amount farmed by a bailiff is distinguished, so you can tell the number of cases where he farms by means of another; undoubtedly it is the case that there are a number of persons owning the land who are farming it by compulsion, if I may say so, and they are unquestionably included in the form of return.

Chairman.

4989. Just one question about that form which you have just had in your hand. At what time of the year is it filled up?—It is filled up on the 4th day of June annually; and that raises another question which I think it is desirable, if we were allocating the stock to consider, namely, that the position of the stock on the 4th of June is very different from the local distribution of stock, say on the 4th of December.

4990. What I understand is that the return in the countries where there is a good deal of waste land, moorland, and so forth, are not exactly accurate in the sense of showing what stock is kept upon a particular acreage of land?—That would not be accurately shown; but I think that I should point out, in justice to the Agricultural Department who publish those returns, that this particular feature of the non-exhaustiveness of the return has been pointed out repeatedly in the reports. I should not like to give the impression that the returns are issued by the Agricultural Department without that being stated.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

4991. Are the returns filled in always by the farmers, or are the returns to some extent filled in by the Inland Revenue officers?—In a very small per-centage, or about 5 per cent. of the area accounted for, the officers have been obliged to resort to an estimate of the number of holdings; in some of the backward districts, I think of Wales, and certainly Scotland, some of the occupiers have been unable to fill up the rather complicated returns, and do not do it. In the North of Scotland there is a difficulty about the knowledge of the language.

Chairman.

4992. But there was, at all events, at first, great unwillingness, was there not, to fill up the returns?—Yes, there was great unwillingness; but I think that that unwillingness referred almost exclusively to England; there is no unwillingness in Scotland, and very little unwillingness in different districts in England. The great difficulty arises curiously enough in what I may call the Home Counties of England, and there from considerable sized farmers. It was pointed out some years ago on those returns, that whereas the average holdings in Scotland (I can hardly give the figures) of farmers, who did not return their acreage, was something like 7 or 8 acres only, the average persons who neglected or refused in England farmed 135 acres. There was a prejudice and a feeling that possibly the return might be connected with the question of taxation. I think that was a misapprehension which is gradually dying out. But the returns are now nearly exhaustive; something like five or six per cent. would not be a very material matter in an inquiry of that size, where 555,000 of the returns are distributed and collected.

4993. Have you any more observations to make with regard to the special returns which you have been dealing with?—The only other observation which I should like to make before parting with that return is that it should be clearly understood by the Committee that while I give figures for Wales and Scotland, I do it subject to the remark I made of the failure of the

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Chairman—continued.

the return really to show the distribution of the surface in those two cases.

4994. With regard to the assessment of Schedule B, do you wish to say anything more about the Income Tax Table?—I should like, before referring to that, to refer to the question of the number of cultivators. I have dealt with the question of the number of owners cultivating their own land; and now, perhaps, referring to the returns before the Committee, I should like to state that I have made here a rough analysis going back to the first time when we have got statistics of the number, so far as we can learn them from the returns of the persons farming, that is cultivators generally, in order to see whether there is any diminution in the number. I find that the number of returns has been singularly uniform from the year 1870; they were commenced, I should say, in 1866, but for the first two or three years there were defects in collection, so I take it from 1870. The number of returns received representing separate holdings in that year was 394,000; I am speaking now of England only. The number of returns received last year was 426,000. Therefore the change, if any, has been one towards subdivision; there are a larger number of returns made. But the annual statement, which is given in the yellow form I have referred to, is not exactly that of the number of separate occupiers. This I think I alluded to before, but the number of actual returns made. Those returns are not in all cases holdings; they cannot be; sometimes a man who has two or three farms will make one return, while another man who has three farms will make three separate returns; therefore, a certain allowance has to be made, and on the occasions of the four surveys as to the size of holdings made by the Government in the years 1870, 1875, 1880, and 1885, an attempt has been made (particularly in the last three years) as far as possible to correct any errors arising out of those duplicated returns; and I have been by the kindness of the Agricultural Office supplied with a contrast of the holdings returned on the last occasion, 1885, comparing those for every county with the number of the actual returns made in the same year in what we may call the acreage return; and the difference is very slight, but still it does exist, and in certain counties. The total for England was 416,000 holdings in the acreage return, and 414,950 in the holdings return. It is not a matter which is sufficiently serious statistically to cause much confusion; and I have here an explanation in the case of different counties. I will only quote a single one, where the numbers were pretty considerable. For instance, in the case of Monmouthshire, there was a difference of 208. It appears that this was caused by the holdings in the case of the Agricultural Return having been taken from the number of schedules issued, whilst in the holdings return they were taken from the number actually returned. Some errors of that kind will arise occasionally. In other cases, the decrease of holdings in Staffordshire, for instance, was owing to the supervisor having added to the total number of occupiers the persons who kept live stock, but had no land. And, again, in Yorkshire the disparity was earned by an erroneous method of counting adopted in those cases.

Chairman—continued.

4995. You said that one difference was in consequence of persons who owned stock but had no land?—There are certain persons who own stock but have no land; returns are issued to them, and these returns are given every year.

4996. What sort of men are they?—Chiefly dairymen round towns who keep their cows in stalls. It is a very small matter, but still it does interfere a little with the returns. The chief disparity is from what I have mentioned before; namely, persons holding land in two parishes being counted as two occupiers.

4997. What is the result of the return that you have generally; do they show a diminution or an increase?—The general tendency is a slight increase in the number of occupations.

4998. Between 1870 and 1885, that is to say?—Yes. The figures for 1870 are not of so much value, because they were not so complete; the department had only begun to work, but for the last three years there is a very slight difference. I may say roughly that the 412,000 holdings in 1875 had become 415,000 in 1885; there is a slight increase. And on that return, and as corroborating that return, I have received from the Inland Revenue Office a statement of the separate assessments made to Schedule B.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

4999. You are speaking of England alone now?—I have been speaking of England alone up to this point. The return given me by the Inland Revenue Office is for the United Kingdom.

5000. The number of holdings you have just quoted in 1885, refers only to England?—Yes, all my own returns refer only to England. The return I am now about to quote from, from the Inland Revenue Office, is one giving the separate assessments to Schedule B. in the whole of the United Kingdom, and is not so useful therefore for our purpose, because it includes the Irish returns which may complicate the matter, but it shows the same features. From 1878 to 1887, the last decade, the number of assessments to Schedule B. have risen from 1,525,600 to 1,586,000; that is a slight increase in the period. And to make this more complete I have myself examined the figures as far back as the year 1869; and I find that over that period, taking those for England alone, there has been an increase of 100,000 in the separate assessments of persons holding land; that is to say that under Schedule B. the returns for 1868-69 were 696,000; the returns for the last year, 1886-87, which is the last year available, the number was 795,000, which is an increase of exactly 100,000 in the interval. That shows, therefore, a general tendency towards subdivision, so far as we may take the separate properties assessed to Schedule B. as indicating that. I do not wish for a moment to place too much stress upon this return, because I am conscious of the fact that there are far more assessments than holdings, and properties may be amalgamated, and yet remain as separate assessments on the books of the Inland Revenue Office; but, on the other hand, if there was any excessive process

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

process of agglomeration of property there would hardly be a tendency to an increased number of assessments, the area being the same at the two dates.

5001. Those statistics are so valuable that we want to know exactly what we are to understand. When you say that in the report for 1885 there were 415,000 holdings in England only, and that that number constituted an increase over a return of a few years before, do you include allotments down to a quarter of an acre?—Every holding down to a quarter of an acre.

5002. Can you tell us whether the increase in the direction of that class, is rather an increase of allotments than an increase of what we may call small farm holdings. The reason I ask is because we know that there has been a large increase in the number of allotments during the last year or two, and seeing that they are included in the return; if the increase is in that particular class of holdings, of allotments down to a quarter of an acre, then that throws us back on the conclusion that there has been no increase in the number of small holdings?—The returns that were given in 1875, 1880, and 1885 are capable of analysis upon that point; you can there find exactly the number of holdings proper of under 50 acres in each of those three years, and also for the holdings of under 20 acres, if you go back to the return of 1870, can be contrasted with those now existing.

5003. In 1885, for instance, there were 21,069 holdings of what we call allotments of a quarter of an acre and under one acre; could you tell whether they have increased; could you compare that number with the number of allotments a few years ago, so that we may ascertain whether the increase of the total is due rather to the increase in these small allotments than to the increase of these small farm holdings?—I am afraid that I could not distinguish the allotments from the other holdings, because there has been, as has been explained in the reports of the Agricultural Department, some little overlapping of two separate sets of returns; the return known as the Allotments Return, which came out in 1886, I think included certain properties which appeared, no doubt, in the Agricultural Returns as holdings. But in the letter which I received from the Inland Revenue Office at the time of the Conference at Rome that I spoke of, it is distinctly stated that no schedules of the nature I have shown here are sent out to persons holding land solely for use as garden allotments. Therefore, the intention is that no such allotments ought to appear in the Agricultural Returns at all; persons holding lands solely for use as garden allotments do not receive these returns to fill up; therefore the allotments are supposed to be in addition to, and not as part of the holdings. But as a matter of fact, as is well known, some of the larger allotments appear in both returns, and there is a little confusion there.

Chairman.

5004. Have you any observation to make with regard to those particular returns from 1870 to 1885?—I think not, except to suggest their use for comparative purposes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5005. How far back can you compare your tables; how far back have you the returns of holdings, say, from 20 to 50 acres?—I have here a return of 1870, which can be compared with a return of 1885; but I have some doubt, speaking statistically, of the completeness of the return of 1870. We have no parallel return except for holdings of under 50 acres for the whole series of years. The last occasion on which the holdings return was taken was in the year 1885, published in the returns of 1886. This was the only occasion on which an entirely exhaustive survey of the whole of the holdings in all the grades and classes was made; that is to say in the following groups, all holdings of under one acre; of one acre to five acres; of five acres to 20 acres; of 20 acres to 50 acres; of 50 to 100 acres; of 100 acres to 300 acres; of 300 acres to 500 acres; of 500 acres to 1,000 acres; and of 1,000 acres and upwards.

5006. And when was the first occasion on which that return was made?—That was the only occasion, in 1885. It was a suggestion made by myself that it would be very desirable, instead of having separate returns of small groups as in 1870, and in 1871 and 1872, of holdings below 50 acres, and as on the other occasion of holdings below 50 acres only, to bring the whole series into one form; and no doubt in future years we shall be able to make close comparisons.

5007. Then there are no means of comparing the number of holdings in England of from 20 acres to 50 acres, say, in 1870, or some years back?—Yes; in 1870 I can give them, but not again until 1885.

5008. In fact, in 1885 the number of holdings in England above five acres and not exceeding 20 acres were 109,285; can you tell us the number of that class of holding which existed in 1871?—In 1871 a return was made of all the holdings of under 20 acres; but this would not be the exact group that you have quoted; it would include not only the 109,000, but the 103,000 under five acres, and the 23,000 under one acre. That particular group cannot be compared.

5009. Can you give us a group of from 20 acres to 50 acres?—No; the returns were not made in that form at both dates, 1871 and 1885.

5010. Can you give us the group of from 20 acres downwards?—Certainly.

5011. From 20 acres to a quarter of an acre?—I will add them together and see what they will come to. I have not made that calculation, but I could do it in a moment. Speaking broadly, the difference would be in England that in 1871 there were 211,465 holdings altogether of under 20 acres, and now there are 233,583. That means, of course, a considerable increase in the smallest grade of holdings.

5012. Can you give us the same figures between 50 acres and 100 acres in 1871?—I cannot, for the reason which I pointed out, that the returns are not so made. I can give you the figures for 1875.

5013. That is a considerable way back, if you can give it?—Yes; I can give it for the decade. I can give the holdings of under 50 acres; they do

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

do not distinguish between classes of holdings under 50 acres, but lump them in one group.

5014. That includes all the smaller ones again?—Yes.

5015. Then we may take it from you that the number of small holdings of 20 acres and under in 1871 was 211,465, while according to the return in 1885, it was 233,583, showing an increase in the small holdings of from 20 acres downwards of 22,118 in the interval of 1871 to 1885?—Yes; and it will be useful perhaps to compare the increase of all holdings for the same periods. The increase of the total number of holdings in England within the same years was from 394,000 to 415,000, which shows that the whole increase was in the smaller class.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5016. I suppose you are aware that there has been a vast increase of what I may call villadom all over the country, and I think you have also told us that the returns do not distinguish between villa holdings and agricultural holdings?—That is so.

5017. Is it not the case that it would, therefore, be almost impossible to gather from these returns whether there has been really an increase or decrease in the number of small agricultural holdings?—I think that the only way in which to arrive at a conclusion would be to take those counties in which there has been no great increase of villadom, and to take them county by county, and to see where the difference has arisen. In Surrey, for instance, or in Berkshire, or in Kent, or near London, no doubt that would be a very potent element; but if you take Cambridgeshire or some of the northern counties, and some parts of Lincolnshire, there would be no such feature, and there it must be owing to the distribution of agricultural holdings.

5018. Is there any county in England in which there has not been a vast increase of villadom?—I am not quite certain what the honourable Member means by villadom. There is undoubtedly this great increase: that many persons who were formerly living in quite small towns now live outside the town; and whereas they formerly had no land, they have now a paddock, or a little bit of land attached to their houses; but that would be, speaking economically, as much in occupation of land as that by any of the farmer occupiers of the land. There are many persons occupying land who are not agriculturists. And on that point I should like to call the attention of the Committee to a very valuable report on German agricultural conditions prepared by a social inquiry society of Leipzig, which I had occasion to get a few years ago. There, in analysing the holdings, a distinction was carefully drawn between the persons occupying land who were solely engaged in agriculture, and the persons occupying small holdings who had some other business; and in this paper of mine (to which I have already alluded) I have given a single instance of a single district where that distinction had been made apparent. I do not think it would be possible to do it here. I took a single district in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Reichen; the holdings were grouped there as those under

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

12½ acres; those between 12½ acres and 25 acres; those between 25 and 50 acres, and those between 50 and 125 acres. In the lower class there were 122 holdings, but of those only 30 were in the hands of cultivators who were exclusively agricultural, and the remaining 92 were in the hands of cultivators with other pursuits.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5019. Would it distinguish sufficiently, in order to extract the villa holding from the rack holdings, to distinguish them between pleasure and profit. Villa holding is essentially a holding for pleasure; for the pony and the cow?—There is no such return now.

5020. How would that do?—I doubt whether the distinction could be made, because a certain amount of profit is probably made by the man who has a paddock and keeps a cow, and has milk from that cow, instead of buying it.

5021. That would be very technically correct; but substantially it is a fact that he has the holding for the purposes of pleasure, having a little ground attaching to his house to ward off neighbours?—I think that there would be considerable difficulty in inducing people to make a return that they held it merely for pleasure. These are voluntary returns you must remember. They are not compulsory returns; and there might be a difficulty in getting people to state the fact, if you were to go into the motives for which a man is occupying his land.

5022. But still there may be a small holder as contrasted with those with other occupations. A man might hold two or three acres and have another occupation, such as carting stones or parish road-making?—That is a very common case.

5023. Well now such a carman might have two or three acres, and he would be perfectly correct in describing himself as of another occupation; but we know that in the villa case the two acres would be for pleasure rather than for profit. That is the sort of thing we want to get at?—The question has been raised with regard to the classification under the census. It was pointed out by myself and others in a recent discussion which was raised at the Statistical Society, that there is at present an entire discrepancy between the returns given in the census of agriculturists and in the returns from which I have been quoting of the Agricultural Department, showing the number of holdings, the difference, and it is a very enormous one, being in the persons who occupy land but do not return themselves as in any sense farmers. For instance, there are only 225,000 farmers, according to the census in England and Wales, but there are 475,000 agricultural holdings; therefore, 250,000 persons hold land of some sort without being, in the census sense of the term, agriculturists. But then I think I must say that the census returns are defective entirely, inasmuch as when a man is both, let us say a brewer and a farmer, and enters in his census schedule the word "brewer" first and "farmer" second, he goes down as a brewer, though his farming may be larger than the brewery; and where a man returns himself as a farmer first and a brewer afterwards, he goes down as a farmer, though his

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

brewery may be more important than his farm. Therefore, there is an initial error in this return. That information can only be obtained by an exhaustive inquiry (as I suggested at the time) being made at the same time as the census into the number of holdings and the character of the occupations.

Chairman.

5024. Have you yourself drawn any conclusion from the figures which you have given us as to whether the number of small holdings has increased or decreased?—My own impression (which, of course, is a very general one) is that there has been in quite recent years a distinct increase in the number of small holdings; I think that that is shown by the returns.

5025. And that is irrespective of what the honourable Baronet called the growth of villadom?—I think that independently of that there has been an increase in the number of small holdings; it may not be a great one, but it is a current in the opposite direction to that which happened in the earlier period of the century. The holdings were tending to come together when we first got the returns, and now the tendency, so far as we can judge, is to dispersion rather than to agglomeration.

5026. And you have had an opportunity of judging of that in some counties in which there is not much increase of building?—Yes.

5027. Have you anything to say as to the number of small holdings in any of the counties of England in respect of any particular proportion in the various counties?—In answer to that question, I may say that I have made a note of different counties which have very different percentages of small holdings which strikes one in the returns. For instance, in the case of such counties as Monmouth, the percentage of holdings under one acre is only 6½ per cent.; whereas in Somerset it is nearly 12 per cent.; in Gloucester it is nearly 11 per cent., and in counties like Norfolk the percentage of holdings of under one acre rises to nearly 15 per cent., which is a very large proportion; whereas in Lincolnshire, which is a county noted for the number of its small freeholders, the percentage is only 4½ per cent.

5028. What is the acreage that you are dealing with in this case?—I am dealing with holdings of under one acre; from a quarter of an acre to an acre.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5029. You have nothing below a quarter of an acre?—Nothing below a quarter of an acre is acknowledged at all. In the county of Suffolk the percentage is about 5 per cent. only, and in Essex it is only 3 per cent., although the villa element might be considerable in the latter case.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5030. That is in number?—Yes; in acreage, of course, it is a very small proportion; but in the number of holdings, if we take the next stage, that is to say holdings of one acre, and under five acres, I find that in Cambridgeshire there are no less than 30 per cent. of the whole number of holdings between one acre and five acres; and in Bedfordshire as much as 33 per cent.; whereas if you take a county like Durham you would have only 16 per cent. in that class; or if you take Northumberland you will have about 16 per cent. in that class. Again if you take Westmoreland you have only 13 per cent. in that class; in Lancashire you have about 16½ per cent. in that class; but in Cheshire you have quite 30 per cent. These are very great differences showing that the geographical conditions of the counties, which determine the presence of small holdings, are very different.

Chairman.

5031. I should like to have the same figure in the case of holdings of between one acre and five acres given us in the counties for which you have given us the number under one acre. Can you give us the number in Monmouthshire, for instance?—In Monmouthshire the number of holdings of between one acre and five acres are 20 per cent. of the whole of the holdings.

5032. And Somerset?—In Somerset they are 27 per cent.

5033. Gloucester?—Gloucester 31½ per cent.

5034. Norfolk?—Norfolk 26½ per cent.

5035. Lincolnshire?—Twenty-seven and a half per cent.

5036. And Essex?—In Essex it is nearly 23 per cent.; the numbers in that class are pretty even in those counties.

5037. Have you a return of the acreage of the small holdings?—I have acreage returns so far as regards the nine counties in the east of England. I find that the acreage in holdings under one acre was only 0·04 per cent.; that the acreage between one acre and five acres was 1 per cent; that the acreage between five acres and 20 acres was something under 4 per cent.; that the acreage between 20 acres and 50 acres was 6 per cent.; that the acreage between 50 acres and 100 acres was nearly 10 per cent.; that the acreage between 100 acres and 300 acres was 36 per cent., and rather more; that the acreage between 300 acres and 500 acres was about 22 per cent.; and above that practically 20 per cent.; making up very nearly, as will be seen, 100. And at page 9 of the paper to which I have alluded before I have done the same thing; the Government return does not do it, therefore I have done it myself for the whole of England, showing exactly how the surface is divided as regards acreage in those several groups of holdings. I find that the percentage is exactly the same as that which I have just now read in the lowest grade for the eastern counties of England. The percentage for the whole of England is 0·04 under one acre; with regard to holdings of between one acre and five acres the percentage for the whole of England is slightly greater than that for the Eastern Counties, being 1·15 per cent.; the number of holdings of between five acres and 20 acres is considerably greater for the whole of England than for the eastern counties of England; that is to say, that practically 5 per cent. of the area of England is held in holdings of between five acres and 20 acres; or taking the classification which the returns of 1871 made, the amount of land in England in all holdings under 20 acres is 6 per cent.

5038. That

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Mr. Jesse Collings.

5038. That is from 20 acres down to a quarter of an acre?—That is 20 acres and downwards. To put it in another way, if you take a map of England, the amount of land which is farmed in 20-acre and smaller holdings, is exactly equal to the whole county of Devon. That gives you an exact idea of the proportion. If you take holdings of under 50 acres in England, I find that you could represent them by the superficies of the three South Western counties of Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset. Those figures I think may be relied upon, inasmuch as they are direct deductions from the Government Returns at the latest period, in the year 1885.

Chairman.

5039. Have you anything to say with regard to the variation in the proportions in the different counties?—The variation in the proportions in the different counties is, I think, to be ascribed very much to the different characters of the soil, and to the position of the markets, and to the agricultural features of the several counties; and I wish rather to explain to the Committee that in making any deductions from the returns and figures that I have quoted you should attach more importance to these natural features, and to the position of the markets around than to anything else in determining whether there are more or less small holdings in a given county. Those counties in which you have towns and manufactures and industries are found to have a larger number of small holdings than those counties where you have very bleak hilly country, where you have small holdings only on the good land below the hills. Where you have large corn-growing flat counties, the tendency is to have large holdings; and these natural features, I may say, govern not only the English Returns, but in the same way, so far as I could discover, the French Returns as well. It is rather a question of natural feature than anything else which determines the preponderance of small holdings in any county. On this point I may, perhaps, be allowed to quote a discussion which took place some years ago at the Central Chamber of Agriculture, because, after two adjournments and repeated notice to all the chambers in association, they were asked, in consequence of a Bill which was then before Parliament, to consider the question of the comparative advantages of large and small holdings, and the result of that debate, in which some of the most practical men connected with the farming and management of property were present, was to show the immense importance of the geographical position in determining that question of large and small holdings. A resolution was carried which was in these terms: "That this Council, whilst fully recognising the importance of securing as large a number as possible of persons directly interested in the cultivation of the soil, is of opinion that experience proves, where mixed husbandry prevails, the size of holdings must be regulated by the following circumstances: First, large farms are most suitable where the conformation of the country allows of large evenly-shaped inclosures, and where the soil and climate are especially adapted to the growth of cereals and

Chairman—continued.

the rearing of sheep. Second, small farms are preferable in hilly or rugged districts where fields are necessarily small, and where the soil and climate are especially favourable to permanent grass, consequently where a large proportion of pasture prevails, and dairy produce forms a main source of income. Third, market gardens as well as allotments generally can only be successfully established where the soil is good, and the situation closely adjoins the houses of the cultivators, and where good roads afford an easy access for the transport of manure and produce." That is a resolution which bears upon the point which you asked me.

5040. Is there anything further that you wish to add before we leave that part of the inquiry?—No, I think not; I think that the figures as regards the number of holdings have been put in so far as I have them here.

5041. I will now take you to the question of the agricultural population. It has been stated that there has been a great diminution in the population in the agricultural districts; have you anything to say with regard to that point?—On that question I do not know whether the attention of the Committee has been already called to a very important paper which was read by Dr. Ogle, the Superintendent of the Registrar General's Department of the Census Office, quite recently at the Statistical Society, on the question of agricultural depopulation. If that evidence has been given already to the Committee, I need not enter upon it.

5042. I think not?—If it bears upon the question before the Committee I think it is desirable that it should be known on such an authority as that of the Chief Superintendent of the Registrar General's Department, that selecting the 15 counties which are typically agricultural, and subtracting from the population of those counties the persons resident in towns or in urban sanitary districts of 10,000 inhabitants and over, there has only been a diminution in the population, that is to say, in the rural population, in the last 30 years, of one per cent. The aggregate population of those counties has declined, but only from 2,381,000 in 1851 to 2,358,000 in 1881. But there have been most extraordinary varieties in the current of events in those 15 counties, and there are only nine counties in which any diminution has occurred. Perhaps I had better read to the Committee the counties in which any agricultural depopulation, in the strict sense of the term, has taken place in the last 30 years.

5043. If you please?—They are, first of all, Huntingdonshire, which shows by far the largest decrease, it being, in the case of that county, very nearly 12 per cent.; then we have Norfolk, which has 9½ per cent. decrease in the population of the country districts; then we have a group of four counties: Cambridge, Suffolk, Wiltshire, and Rutland, in all of which there has been a decrease of between 5 and 6 per cent.; Dorsetshire has decreased about 3 per cent., and Herefordshire has decreased less than 2 per cent. On the other hand, among the agricultural counties, Berkshire appears to have increased by 16 per cent. in the same interval;

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Chairman—continued.

and, personally, I have very little doubt that that increase is to be attributed to what an honourable Member has just said with regard to the returns of the growth of persons living in the country who are not agriculturists. Then we have the county of Hertfordshire, which seems to have increased by 10 per cent., possibly, to some extent, from the same cause. Buckinghamshire, which is another agricultural county, has increased by 5 per cent., and Westmoreland, which has been spoken of as one of the counties where the agricultural population has been declining, has increased by nearly 9 per cent. in the population in the interval. Those figures I give for what they are worth. But Westmoreland is an exceptional county, and very small; it is not a large enough area to draw very important deductions from.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5044. The statement with regard to Westmoreland I should think would not be worth very much in that respect, because there are not many towns with 10,000 inhabitants and upwards in that county?—No.

5045. And there has been a great spread of small iron works and coal works in that district?—I was just about to call attention to that point. I think that the agricultural population of Westmoreland, in the sense of the census, is comparatively small; it is only 12 per cent. of the whole; whereas in Rutlandshire or Lincolnshire it is 14 or 15 per cent. So that Westmoreland, although it is generally spoken of as an agricultural county, must have other industries which are employing a considerable portion of the population.

Chairman.

5046. I should like to ask you about these figures in the case of Huntingdonshire, where you say that the decrease has been 12 per cent.?—That is the greatest decrease, and therefore, Huntingdonshire being the county with the greatest decline, Dr. Ogle selected it for a careful and close analysis.

5047. Will you give us the result of your inquiry with regard to Huntingdonshire?—The figures with regard to Huntingdonshire were first analysed to show at what date this decrease had taken place; and it is interesting to see that that county had at the beginning of the century 35,000 persons in these non-urban districts. These numbers steadily increased (I am merely giving you the purport of Dr. Ogle's paper) up to the year 1851, and, from the year 1851 up to the present time, there has been a distinct decrease. But all those figures which I have read to the Committee only come down to the last census which was taken, of course, in the year 1881; and, speaking for myself, and not quoting from Dr. Ogle's paper, I should expect to find that a considerable decrease may have occurred in the course of the last eight years.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5048. Have you got the figures for Bedfordshire?—The county of Bedford has increased in the interval by 3 per cent.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5049. Have you the figures for Lincolnshire?—In Lincolnshire the figures are nearly stationary; the increase is something under one per cent. But there again the case of special towns with under 10,000 inhabitants probably affects the question to some extent. There are in Lincolnshire urban sanitary districts of smaller size than those which are affected. I should, perhaps, go on to say that, in addition to analysing the general decrease of the population in each particular class, the occupations other than agricultural are analysed, for Hunts only, and the numbers in each class are shown where they have increased or decreased.

Chairman.

5050. Taking the decrease in the county of Huntingdon, what do these figures show?—The number of farmers shown in the Census Returns does not represent the number of holdings of land, because, for the reason which I have already explained, the census classification is taken on the first entry in the schedule filled up by the householder; that is to say, that if he returns himself as first a farmer, and then a wheelwright, or a blacksmith, or anything else, he goes down as a farmer; but if any other occupation is put first, and farmer afterwards, he is classed in the Census Returns in the other class, and his occupation as a farmer therefore does not count. Accordingly, to argue from the census figures as to the number of persons returning themselves as farmers, or the number of holdings separately returned in the detailed analyses of the census books, is to miss a large number of the holdings of the country. I have put together one or two figures for the purpose of comparing the number of farmers and graziers as shown in the census tables with the number of occupiers of land as shown in the Agricultural Returns, from which it appears that in a county like Lincolnshire there were only 10,000 persons returned as holding land and therefore agriculturists in that sense, in the Census Returns, while there were 26,000 separate persons farming according to the Agricultural Returns; thus no fair comparison can be drawn from the census figures; and my object, in pressing the point, was to suggest that in taking the next census it would be very important to make the return of the agricultural holdings to which I have referred before, contemporaneous with the census, and to make the one supplement the other, instead of attempting to get, through the census machinery, that which the census cannot give; viz., an analysis of the number of farms or holdings in the country.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5051. On that point do you throw any doubt upon what is called the corrected statement in the census, that the decrease in the number of agricultural labourers and the number of farm servants has been 91,550, or nearly 10 per cent. in the decade from 1871 to 1881?—That is the decrease in the number of agricultural labourers after allowance is made for the retired; but that, of course, is very different in different counties again; and it is subject to this great qualification, that the classification of farm labourers in the

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

the census is quite as defective, if I may say so, as the classification of farmers to which I have just referred. The census authorities themselves in the preface to the last census point out that very great difficulty is experienced in ascertaining that the number of persons returning themselves as agricultural labourers really means the same thing at the two periods. There is the great difficulty.

5052. But the classification is the same in 1881 as it was in 1871?—Yes; but it was pointed out in 1871 that the comparison with 1861 was probably entirely defective on account of the number returning themselves under the heading of labourers in the one case, and farm labourers in the other; and if it was inaccurately done the comparison would be entirely thrown out. Therefore, Dr. Ogle expressly speaks of the rural population as a whole as being a better index than that classification of agricultural labourers, in which he himself sees the difficulty. Taking it on the census figures, undoubtedly the figures are as the honourable Member has put them; and in Huntingdonshire the labourers there have declined by the largest proportion of any county in England. There is a very curious fact about the county of Huntingdon (which I examined very closely, when I found that the decline instead of being 9 or 10 per cent. was 20 per cent.) I found that Huntingdon, although a county of peculiar character with regard to the loss of its agricultural population, has more small holdings than its neighbours; and what is still more remarkable is, it has not really so much extension of grass land in recent years as many of its neighbours. The point is very curiously illustrated, if we compare the two counties of Rutland and Huntingdon, which are somewhat alike, and one would naturally suppose that the agricultural depression would affect them pretty nearly equally. I found that in Rutland, where the whole population, so far as the census classification goes, is rural, there are 16 agricultural workers to each hundred of the population. Now in Huntingdonshire there are 17 such workers; so that they are very much alike in agricultural conditions. The average size of a farm holding in the whole of England is 60 acres at the present time. In Rutland it is as much as 74 acres; and in Huntingdon it is 66 acres; and both counties are very well supplied with agricultural allotments, comparatively speaking, there being in Huntingdon 34, and in Rutland 31 to every 1,000 acres of cultivation. But Huntingdon has a very much greater share of what are called small holdings than Rutland has. The holdings of under 20 acres in Huntingdon are 62 per cent. of the whole number of holdings; whereas in Rutland they are only 47 per cent. And the still smaller class of holdings shows the same variation. Huntingdon has 37 per cent. of holdings of under five acres, while Rutland has only 21 per cent. of under five acres. But in Rutland the population in the last 10 years, I mean the population of agricultural labourers in the sense which the honourable Member has just quoted, have only diminished by one per cent., whereas in Huntingdon, which is a county where there are more small holdings, they have diminished

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

by 20 per cent., which is a very remarkable fact. And this is still more remarkable if you consider that the per-centage extension of permanent pasture, which is supposed to be the cause of diminishing labour on farms, is a matter of 9 per cent. in Huntingdonshire, and of as much as 12 per cent. in Rutland; and if that was compared with some other counties, such as Worcestershire or several other of the western counties, it would be found that the exceptional falling off in the agricultural labourers in Huntingdonshire cannot be accounted for either by the absence of small holdings or by the increase of grass cultivation. There are some reasons therefore which require to be found yet to explain the very large falling off in the agricultural labouring population in Huntingdonshire above that of all the other counties.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5053. In your opinion, is it not the fact that in small holdings the whole of the family are largely engaged in the work, although they are not enumerated as agricultural labourers in the Census Returns, and that that might to a certain extent account for what would appear to be a diminution in the number of labourers in the small holdings districts?—In reply to that question I should say, as I have said before, that undoubtedly on the small holdings men will be employed who are not returned as agricultural labourers, and that it would be very desirable if we could analyse our Census Returns more closely. I have, in fact, called attention to that very point in a Paper which I read the other day on farm labour, showing that from an economical point of view it is a great mistake to omit the calculation of labour expended by persons who are unpaid. But with regard to the case of Huntingdonshire and Rutlandshire, I should like to call attention to the fact that not only has the agricultural labourer diminished in greater proportion in Huntingdon than in Rutland, but the general agricultural population, which would include the persons to whom the honourable Member alluded, has also fallen off by twice as many persons in Huntingdon as in Rutland; so including those persons who are agricultural but not labourers, the per-centage of decrease in the population in Huntingdon is 12 per cent., and in Rutland it is only 5 per cent. There is therefore a larger decrease of persons as well as of labourers in the county which enjoys the larger proportion of small farms.

5054. That might be affected by the change of cropping, perhaps?—But the change of cropping has been rather against Rutland than against Huntingdon. I have examined that question.

Chairman.

5055. Is there anything further that you wish to say upon that point?—Not on the question of the agricultural population.

5056. Is there any other county which you have in your mind?—I did not propose to go into any further point with regard to the agricultural population in England.

5057. I was going to ask you, has there been any diminution of the agricultural population in

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Chairman—continued.

France as well as in England?—That, I think, is undoubtedly a fact; and I think it is one that requires to be read along with the question of English depopulation. In the agricultural districts of nearly all countries, in small farm countries as well as large, the same feature has been observed of a relative, not always an absolute, diminution in rural population; and as regards France the figures are rather striking. I have analysed those figures from the latest French returns, which are of a much later date than those given in my Paper, and if it is the wish of the Committee I shall be glad to mention them.

5058. I understand you to say that there has been, not only in France but in several other countries, a diminution in the agricultural population?—Yes, there has been a considerable relative diminution of the agricultural population in all countries. The tendency is to be remarked even in America; it is beginning to fill the towns at the expense of some parts of the country; in the older States of the Union particularly. I have made a comparison of the agricultural population of France at two different dates, 1862 and 1882, in order to compare those figures with the English figures. I am obliged to take that 20 years' period, because those are the years compared by M. Tisserand in the "Official Inquiry" which has just been issued. And I wish to explain that the term "agricultural population," as used in France, has quite a different meaning from the term "agricultural population" in our Census Returns, and must not be confused with it. We apply it only to persons engaged in agriculture working on the land. In France the term is applied to all the persons owning the land and working on it, and to all their dependents, which materially alters the proportion between the two countries. In our Census Returns not more than 5 per cent. of our population is supposed to be working in agriculture; whereas the agricultural population of France represents nearly half the community. There were, in 1862, in France, 7,363,000 persons actually employed in agriculture as owners, farmers, or labourers; but there were also dependents of those classes to the amount of 12,510,000, who are reckoned along with the working population as making up the 20,000,000 of the agricultural population of France at that date. That population has now diminished to 18,249,000. The diminution in recorded owners, farmers, and labourers, I find is, practically, half a million, 450,000, that is 6 per cent.; whereas the diminution in their various dependents is more than that, or 9 per cent., showing that a larger portion of the dependant classes than of workers have left the rural districts of France. The total decline in the agricultural districts appears therefore to be 8 per cent. But, after making this calculation, it becomes necessary of course to correct it for the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine; and as there was a very large agricultural population in those provinces, it appears necessary to make a great deduction from the loss on the whole of France. I find that, taking off the losses so caused, the decline in the agricultural population of France is about

Chairman—continued.

626,000 persons, or about 3·3 per cent. in 20 years; and that figure may, perhaps, be compared with the decline in the agricultural population of England, so far as it is represented by the 15 counties of Dr. Ogle, which was only 1 per cent. in 30 years. Therefore, correction being made for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, the decrease in France of the agricultural population has been apparently greater than the decrease in the sample taken of the agricultural population of England.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5059. But are you comparing agricultural population with agricultural population; or are you comparing the agricultural population of France with the agricultural population of those counties of England which you treat as agricultural population?—I am comparing the ascertained agricultural population of France with the picture given by the 15 most conspicuously agricultural counties in England, which were regarded at the Registrar General's Office as typical of the agricultural population. I do not think that I can make a better comparison than that, because we have not the facts as regards our agricultural population.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5060. But you are taking the whole of France?—Yes, because the returns enable me to do so; comparing that area with the 15 agricultural counties of England, their population will not be so very unlike the French section quoted; it will be much more akin to those 15 counties than to the urban counties of England.

Chairman.

5061. I understand that there is no fear of mixing up the urban and the agricultural population in France as there is in England; you have told us what the agricultural population of France consisted of, that the term is simply applied to the agricultural population. You have not got the danger there that you have in taking the agricultural counties here, where you mix up people who are not altogether agricultural people, though they live on the land?—No; the figures I give from this French column are persons who own or in any way depend on the land; and in those there is 3·3 per cent. decrease in 20 years.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5062. I hardly understand, if you omit the urban and semi-urban counties in England, seeing that the same conditions exist in France to a much more limited extent I grant, but still they do exist, why you take the whole of France?—I only take the whole of France because the figures are available for France as a whole, and I can quote from official returns. I was about to extend the information in order to make it complete, to explain how this diminution in France is arrived at, because it will be more interesting to the Committee to know the classes which have diminished than to make what I admit is a very loose and general comparison.

Chairman.

5063. Certainly?—There are 450,000 fewer persons

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Chairman—continued.

persons actually working on the land in France now than there were 20 years ago; but there are 338,000 more persons on that land in France working solely on properties of their own. There are 613,000 fewer persons working partly for themselves, although also owning some portion of land, and yet working as labourers or as farmers under others; and there are 175,000 fewer persons working as farmers, bailiffs, or as labourers and servants on French farms. The French labouring population is very much larger than we sometimes imagine it to be. The actual number of day labourers enumerated in France in 1862 was 2,004,000; but in 1882 there were only 1,481,000, which means a loss of 523,000 persons in the class of day labourers employed in agriculture. To those I have added the resident farm servants, who reside with the farmer, and are of course part of the agricultural staff; they have changed very much less; but they have also decreased. The male servants, who were 1,458,000 20 years ago, are 1,422,000 now, showing very little reduction; the female servants, exactly as in England on the farms, show a very great reduction comparatively; the reduction being from 638,000 in 1862, to 532,000 in 1882. That, of course, is a much larger decrease in percentage than that of the male servants. But the total loss of the agricultural labourers in France has also to be corrected in the same way as that of the general population, by the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Making that allowance, an allowance I should say which is not made by me, but by M. Tisserand, in the official enquiry it appears that 548,000 is the aggregate loss of farm labourers in the interval; and he remarks upon this in his report that this fact is not altogether to be deplored because it enables the French agriculturalists to produce, as they are producing, increased produce with a less expenditure of labour, and that the gain in the cost of production is equal to 250,000,000 francs (that is 10,000,000 *l* sterling), or as M. Tisserand puts it, practically, more than the entire *impôt foncier* imposed upon the land. But I should point out to the Committee that that has been coincident with a distinct increase in the number of those labourers who are now farming for themselves on small holdings in various parts of France. The owner farmers, taking them of all classes large and small, are 275,000 less than they were, or 7 per cent.; and the persons working on the land in France who have no proprietary interest in the land, are less by 175,000, or 4 per cent. The owner farmers are of two classes; they consist of persons who only farm their own land and do nothing else, and they consist also of persons who hire the land of others as well as owning some land, or who (as many of them do) work as labourers. I find that the first class, as I said before, has increased by no less than 338,000, whilst those who are also tenants have decreased by 149,000, those under the *métayer* system by 57,000, and those acting practically as labourers by 407,000, making a net decrease of 275,000 in the persons interested in land. While the class of peasant farmers has therefore grown, the class of men who are also labourers, as well as owners, has remarkably diminished by about 36 per cent. The French statistics are very full in the details of the owner farming class, showing what number of owners there were at the different periods. I do not know whether those figures are of any use to the Committee, but I could mention them if it is desirable.

Chairman—continued.

5064. Speaking broadly, have the number of owners increased or decreased?—The total number of rural proprietors of land, as calculated in the "Official Inquiry," has diminished; there were at the earlier date 3,800,000 who farmed their land as well as owned it; there are now 3,525,000. These are calculated from the *cotes foncières*, and there is considerable difficulty in the calculation, which is varied from the figures of the Ministry of Finance. In this case 2½ cotes are assumed as belonging to every owner; while the properties in the hands of each owner are still more broken up in *parcelles*.

5065. You have dealt with all classes now of owners farming, and the labourers?—I could give the number in each particular class, showing the diminution or the increase in the owner farmers, the tenant farmers, the *métayers*, and the labourers, in detail, if you wish it. I have the figures here.

5066. Are those figures in French?—Yes. I can give the figures in English; they are, of course, printed in French. Perhaps it would be more simple if I state them simply as percentages, without giving the absolute figures. The number of proprietors (to some extent I must duplicate the answers I have given) exclusively cultivating their own estates, either with the aid of their own family alone or with that of bailiffs, has increased, as I have pointed out before, by a considerable number, the per-centage being 21 per cent. The farmers who are hiring land as tenants are now under one million; their decrease is 6 per cent. The *métayers*, who are the share farmers, have decreased by nearly 16 per cent.; so that what are called *chefs d'exploitations* have decreased materially in the 20-year period. There has been a large increase in the number of actual bailiffs employed, but the total number is very small. There are 17,000 against over 10,000; the percentage is thus very great; it is 75 per cent. The number of agricultural day labourers has diminished by nearly 27 per cent., the number of farm servants has diminished by 7 per cent.; therefore, speaking generally, over the whole population the diminution caused in this way comes to 6 per cent. From that again, of course, you must make the deduction which I have already suggested for the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. The cultivators, who were proprietors at the same time as cultivators for others, have diminished. There is a very peculiar feature in regard to the farm servants which ought perhaps to be noticed, as these general per-centages are a little misleading. I find that the better class of labourers, foremen, and headmen of the farms, as we should call them, have increased by nearly 27 per cent., while the cattle men, shepherds, and others have diminished by about 19 per cent.; and as I said before, the female servants have very largely diminished on the French farms. I have a number of figures here. I do not know whether the Committee would like to hear them; with reference

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Chairman—continued.

to the size of French holdings, and the increase or diminution in several distinct groups: very small holdings, middle-sized holdings, and larger holdings. In this Return there is no holding under a *hectare*; therefore, no holding under 2½ acres is included at all, because the French figures of 1862, with which the 1882 data had to be compared, did not relate to holdings below that size. The French farms in 1862 of from 2½ acres to 12½ acres were in number 1,816,000; they are now (that is in 1882) 1,866,000. which is an increase of nearly 3 per cent. The class of holdings just above that have very much more increased in number; from 12½ acres to 25 acres, they have increased by 24 per cent., making the *petite culture* altogether greater by 8 per cent.; the middle-class farms of from 25 to 100 acres have increased by 14 per cent.; but the larger farms over the whole of France have materially diminished, or by 8 per cent. in this interval, although these still cover nearly half the surface. So that the number of holdings accounted for and analysed at the two dates shows an increase of about 8⅔ per cent. Then France, we must remember, as I said, is less by two provinces; and by making a deduction for the fact that she lost a considerable number of holdings, there is a real increase on the whole of France in the number of actual holdings; that is to say, there has been some degree of *morcellement* or breaking up of holdings in the interval, but thus divided they support a smaller agricultural population.

5067. Over what time is that?—Over 20 years, over the same period; but referring only to holdings of above 2½ acres.

5068. Those were all the tables you have with regard to that part of the question?—Yes, with regard to the French population.

5069. And the size, and so forth, of holdings?—Yes.

5070. In the case of other countries, have you any statistics with regard to the increase or diminution of the agricultural population?—Besides the figures I have given with regard to the French population and owners farming, perhaps I ought to explain to the Committee, that in the same volume of the French "Inquiry," a contrast is drawn for all these data, not only for France itself in former years, but with reference to other countries. In the Report of the French Government many parallel statistics are given for Belgium and various other countries; and I would suggest, that if it were possible to have some *résumé* made of this very important volume, it has a very close bearing upon all the questions before the Committee. It is very difficult to give the Committee an idea of the figures contained in a volume of 300 or 400 pages, but if an abstract could be printed of this statement, I think it might assist the present inquiry. These are very recent figures, and they are the most complete that are available. But at the same time I am bound to point out from the point of view of that International Committee, of which I mentioned that I was a member, there are some objections to French statistics, which will be considered at our next meeting in Paris in September; in fact, the whole subject is in a state of considerable difficulty with regard

Chairman—continued.

to some of the details. I have given the best figures I have available; but I do not wish to pledge myself to the absolute accuracy of any figures that may be given; no one likes to found very strong conclusions without hinting that some correction may be hereafter required.

5071. With regard to Belgium, has it increased or decreased in agricultural population?—The agricultural holdings of Belgium have distinctly increased, the small farms particularly. Holdings of a very small class have increased more than those of the class next above it. Belgium is a peculiar instance of the breaking up of property. I think I have alluded, in my Paper at the Statistical Society, to that particular point; that in comparing the Belgian figures of 1846 with the Belgian figures of 1880 (which are the latest they have), I find that their 572,000 holdings, practically the same which we have in Great Britain, have become in this interval 910,000. Since 1866 all the increase has occurred in holdings of under 7½ acres. But, on the other hand, concurrently with this increase there have been several changes of an important nature in Belgium with regard to the produce of the country. I find that as *petite culture* has increased, the number of sheep have very materially diminished, so much so that 10 years ago there were about 586,000 sheep in Belgium, and now there are only 365,000, and that the dependence in Belgium upon other foreign food imports has materially increased in the interval.

5072. In consequence of what?—The native supply of meat is not sufficient for the population, although their consumption is small, the production not being half our own per acre. The import figures may be seen from the Belgium returns which are given annually.

5073. Has the agricultural population of Belgium increased or decreased during the time; have you any figures which bear upon that point?—I have not the comparison here; but undoubtedly the small agricultural holdings have increased. There has been no increase in the larger farms in Belgium, I find that while the increase was 160,000 since 1866 in Belgium, in holdings of little more than one acre, the whole increase in the whole of the holdings in the country has only been 183,000; and the farms over 7½ acres fell off by 17,000; so that the whole of the increase is really in the small holdings. The figures show that the farming of land by its owners is not so prominent in Belgium as in France. In France 80 per cent. of the holdings are worked by their owners; but in Belgium the number of holdings cultivated by their owners exclusively was 217,000 or under 24 per cent., and 76,000 cultivated as to more than one-half; the number of farms in Belgium cultivated by tenants exclusively was 445,000, and, as to more than one-half, 171,000; the general effect being, that the tenant farming is, as I say, in a larger proportion than in France.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5074. Is it not a fact, which perhaps accounts for that, that in Belgium the tenant is very much protected in regard to his improvements?—In certain of the provinces, I believe, much more than in others, there is some difference.

5075. That

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5075. That is quite a different matter from what it is in France?—Undoubtedly, the law of France is very unsatisfactory on that point.

5076. But in Belgium the tenant is protected by law, and gets compensation for improvements to a very large extent?—Certainly that consideration enters into the matter. The French tenantry are not protected at all. And when I was in Paris last autumn a discussion was going on as to the propriety of introducing into France something akin to our own Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883.

Chairman.

5077. Have you anything further to say with regard to either France or Belgium?—With reference to the production of those countries and our own I have made some notes, and also the question of imports and exports.

5078. First with regard to the production; what do you say as to the amount of production on small holdings compared with larger ones?—If I might make a very general statement on that point before giving any details I should like to state that I think there has been a very great deal of confusion, and some exaggeration, on the figures we have heard quoted on both sides of the question. Looking to the extremely different produce it is very difficult to form a distinct impression as to what the produce is in one group of holdings as against another, because the returns are rarely given in comparable form; and one can only generally compare the produce of entire countries with entire countries, or entire departments with entire departments, or particular counties with particular counties. There is no classification in France as there is in England showing the number of live stock or the class of animals exclusively reared, or kept, or fattened on holdings of a particular size or group. Therefore, in regard to the point of production, I have made some calculations, first with reference to our own produce generally, and to the figures as regards the live stock on farms in different groups. I might also quote certain French departments, which is all I can do, as showing the produce credited to those departments; but I think, perhaps, if it would be convenient to the Committee, I had better state what I have with regard to our own holdings, in the matter of produce, before I give the foreign statistics of the same. In the Appendix to the Paper to which I have alluded before I gave in the first instance a very general table contrasting the stock and production of the United Kingdom, taken as a whole (and England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, separately), Austria, Hungary, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, and Italy. Those were the only countries from which I could get the data complete; and, taking our own country first, and in order to avoid error, which always arises, as I have explained to the Committee, from our narrow definition of cultivated land, I have taken a classification which perhaps tells against this country, but is certainly fair to all other countries, namely, that of the entire surface. Such is the number of the inhabitants that in the United Kingdom we have to maintain 288 persons to every square mile, but in the different parts of the United Kingdom

Chairman—continued.

we maintain very different proportions. In this respect England and Belgium are entirely different from all the rest of the countries in my table; and they can be properly contrasted. In England there are 483 persons to every square mile; in Belgium, there are 487; therefore the conditions of the two countries approximate very closely. But in England you have 36 cows maintained to every square mile of territory, whereas in Belgium they maintain a very much larger number of cows, namely, 70 to the square mile. And I think it well to give that figure first, because it tells against our own agriculture. But if you change the figure and take the other stock you find that of cattle other than cows there are in England 58 to the square mile, and in Belgium not much more than 51; whereas of sheep maintained in England there are 322 to the square mile, (that calculation getting rid of the difficulty of the Scotch moors), whereas the Belgians only maintain 32 sheep to the square mile, or one sheep for every ten that we have. Therefore, one-tenth part only of the stock is kept as regards sheep. Contrasting the grain produce of these two countries, according to our produce statistics the English returns average from 28 to 29 bushels of wheat to the acre; the Belgian returns average from 24 to 27 bushels of wheat. Different authorities in different years give a different return. In the case of barley we grow rather less on the average than the Belgians; we get about 34 bushels to the acre to their 35. But they do not grow a very great quantity, not half so much as the county of Norfolk; while, if you take the case of potatoes, which are largely grown in both countries, we grow in England 252 bushels to the acre; whereas the Belgians only grow 164 bushels to the acre. But it is very difficult to state to the Committee what is the gross produce of two different countries when the contrasted kinds of produce are raised in such different proportions, and in such different ways. But as regards the stock on our farms in England, our returns enable us to go below the surface, and to appropriate the quantity of live stock kept on different sizes of farms; and I thought that it might be interesting if I compared the inquiry of 1875 with the inquiry of 1885, in order to discover whether there has been an increase or a decrease in the stock on large farms, or on small farms, and what are the proportions maintained on different holdings. Taking England only, and excluding Scotland and Wales, for reasons which I have already explained, I find that the small farms contained naturally more horses, because they require more working staff; they maintained more cattle, but far less sheep; that is, speaking very broadly. The percentages on the holdings of from one to 50 acres for England, I make as regards cattle 29 per 100 acres, and as regards sheep 39; in holdings of from 50 acres to 100, the percentage of cattle is 23, and of sheep 51, per 100 acres. Making these groups into one, the stock upon the 7,000,000 acres which are farmed in less than 100-acre farms, consists of 26 cattle and 45 sheep to every 100 acres. Taking the larger farms of from 100 to 300 acres, I make the acreage rather more than 10,250,000, upon which there are nearly 2,000,000

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Chairman—continued.

cattle and 6,500,000 sheep, making the cattle only 19 per 100 acres as against 26 on the smaller farms, but making the sheep 63 per 100 acres as against 43. And then taking the much larger farms of over 300 acres, which again have a total area of 7,700,000 acres, you get 1,000,000 cattle and 7,000,000 sheep; the number of cattle having sunk to 13 per 100 acres; but the number of sheep having risen to 93 per 100 acres. That table is, I think, instructive, as showing that with the size of the holding the quantity of cattle decreases, but the quantity of sheep increases. Those, I think, are figures which would be naturally interesting; they are not the figures for Great Britain which appear on page 103 of the Agricultural Returns, because those returns cannot be read without the qualification that I have already explained with regard to the Scotch figures; but the figures will be the same as appear in the Agricultural Returns for England alone. I do not mean to accept even this as an exact statement, because, even in the case of England, if you take Northumberland, you will find something like 45 per cent. of the area not accounted for, and some proportion of the sheep in Northumberland have been, just as in Scotland, doubtless returned as upon land which really did not carry them.

5079. That is to say, in other words, that the sheep have been accounted for, and the land has not?—That is so; but it will, perhaps, be more interesting to see what has been the change in the 10 years during which we have had this analysis of stock on the holdings. Taking horses and dividing the country, as I do, in the table handed in, in these groups, namely, farms under 50 acres, farms from 50 to 100 acres, farms from 100 to 300 acres, and farms over 300 acres, in the first or small farm group, horses have increased in the 10 years, but only by 1¼ per cent; in the group of from 50 to 100 acres the horses are nearly the same, there has been no increase at all; so that practically there is no increase to speak of in the horses of any kind of farm under 100 acres. But quite a different state of matters occurs if you take the larger farms; it is there that the advance of our agriculture has occurred. On farms of from 100 to 300 acres the number of horses kept has increased by nearly 5 per cent. But again, on the still larger farms of over 300 acres, the number of horses (and the increase is in horses kept for breeding, not in the horses employed in agriculture, which have not shown the same development) has increased by over 10 per cent. So that the figures are these: on the small farms of under 100 acres the increase is less than 1 per cent.; on the farms from 100 to 300 acres the increase is 5 per cent., but on the farms of over 300 acres the increase is 10 per cent.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5080. But still they leave a balance in favour of the small holdings?—Yes; because the small farm in proportion to its acreage requires a much larger working staff of horses, and therefore a much greater outlay for labour than the large farms. Then, taking the cattle, the cattle have increased over the whole of England, but they have increased most steadily upon the larger

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

groups of holdings. Upon the group under 50 acres the cattle have increased by 6 per cent.; upon holdings of from 50 to 100 acres they have increased 7 per cent.; but on holdings of from 100 to 300 acres they have increased 12½ per cent.; and on holdings above 300 acres the increase in the same period has been 19 per cent. Then in the case of sheep, where exactly the opposite process has been at work all over England, and we have been losing sheep for some time back; nearly 2,500,000 have gone in 10 years; it is on the small holdings that the heaviest relative losses have occurred. On the holdings of under 50 acres, although they only had 1,800,000 sheep to begin with, they have lost 432,000 in the 10 years, or 24 per cent. of their flocks; that is a loss about as large as the German loss, which is very great in sheep, although not so great as the Belgian loss, which is the very greatest loss in Europe On farms of from 50 to 100 acres there are about the same number less, but as there was a greater number to begin with, the percentage is not quite so great; it is 21 per cent. against 24 per cent. But on holdings of from 100 to 300 acres the loss of sheep, although numerically more, is, as a percentage, far less, being 14·8. While if you take the very large farms of over 300 acres the loss in sheep is quite trifling. Here, although we had 7,500,000 sheep 10 years ago, we have 7,250,000 now, or a percentage loss of only 4 per cent. The figures are these: that the very small farmers have lost in sheep at the rate of 24 per cent.; the next small group at the rate of 21 per cent.; the next larger farmers at the rate of 14·8; and the largest grade of farmers at the rate of only 4 per cent. The whole table shows that it is upon large farms that an increasing amount of stock is kept, and upon the small farms a decreasing amount of stock is most visible. This means no doubt that the poorer farmers have not stood the time of depression so well as the larger farmers.

5081. Will you now refer to the question of foreign produce?—With reference to the French figures, I find that in the returns submitted there is much variation in the produce. This cannot be taken in groups of holdings, but can only be taken for individual departments, and I therefore selected a number of departments, first taking those that showed the smallest sized holdings, then taking those that showed the larger size holdings, then taking those that showed the most owner farms and those that showed the most tenant farms. I find that it is almost impossible to lay down a general rule as regards the production of grain crops on large or small farm departments. The soil and the nature of the climate has much more effect than any mere system of agriculture on that question. For instance, taking the group of French departments where the holdings run from four hectares to seven hectares, which may be taken separately, I find that the wheat yield varies from 13 hectolitres per hectare to 21 hectolitres per hectare, the mean of France being nearly 18; but there are not many cases of those small holding areas in which there are over average productions; there are more under average than over. In the 14 larger farm departments the produce is in six cases over average, and in four important districts much over. The

greater

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

greater produce and better farming is seen on the larger individual farms. Taking the case of the departments which have most owner-farmers, in the case of 17 of the departments where the owner-farming system is strongest, there are varieties of wheat production, from 13 to 28 hectolitres per hectare, but only five of these cases are cases of over average production. In the case of cattle the new French return estimates the quantity of stock kept by the live weight per 100 hectares; and only in four cases out of these 17 departments is there an over average production of live stock. Perhaps the total figures as regards the French production ought to be mentioned, and they are summarised in my Paper. Speaking generally, taking the year 1885, which is about the year we have been comparing, the production of wheat throughout France put into English measures is something like 17½ bushels against our 28 to 29 bushels per acre; of rye the production is 16 bushels per acre (we do not produce much rye): of barley it is 28 as against our 34 bushels per acre; of oats it is 25 as against nearly 40 bushels with ourselves. Potatoes are given as three tons to the acre only. Upon that point I myself made some inquiries in some of the Eastern Departments of France last year when potato lifting was going on while I was on the holdings, and I compared them with the results given in the official returns of our own counties. I thought it might be interesting, as that is a crop on which the small holders rely in both countries. I have taken out four or five French Departments which show an over average yield of French potatoes, and four or five English counties which show considerable growth of English potatoes; and I find that while the mean throughout the whole of France is about 3 tons to the acre as against 6½ tons in England, for individual counties the English counties show, Cambridge with 7·93 per acre, nearly eight tons; Dorset with very nearly as much, 7·89; Essex, 7·66; Chester, 7·6; Lancaster, 6·57; and Lincolnshire, 6·05. The French highest departments are, Ardéche, which only grows four tons to the acre; Puy-de-dome in the southern central district about four tons; the department of Allier about 3½ tons; the department of Haute Saône, which I visited myself, grows about 3½ tons to the acre; and the Rhone Department, where there are very many small holdings, 3½ tons to the acre are grown, showing half our average production, and the fact is emphasised by the Director of Agriculture in France, M. Tisserand, in his report, who has himself had his attention called to this, and who writes, "With an equal yield to the English, French agriculture would on her present surface of potatoes produce no less than 204,000,000 quintals, instead of producing only 101,000,000 quintals." So that the French authorities are recognising the inferiority of their growth. And I mention these facts because I thought that they were more distinctive than any more general statement, and because I can verify them from personal investigation. With reference to what I have said about the live stock I should point out that the proportion of animals in France and in this country are very different, and that one very often omits to take account in the continental countries of the number of cattle, and

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even cows in some instances, which are used for working the farms as well as for meat. Properly speaking, a portion of the French cattle, which were enumerated at 13,000,000 the other day, are really a working staff kept for working the farms; no less than 1,400,000 in the returns of 1886, and in the official returns of 1882 the number is given as 1,500,000. Those are, therefore, not readily available for meat supply, and must be taken account of in estimating the total production of the country. There is another point with regard to dairy produce which I found in the French official summary to which I have before referred. The estimate there made is that with 5,000,000 cows yielding milk France produces about 73,000 tons of butter and 112,000 tons of cheese. Now, we have no good figures in England, nothing more than mere estimates of our production; but I think it ought to be pointed out that although we have only 3,700,000 cows we are supposed to produce 95,000 tons of butter against the French 73,000 tons. Although we largely import butter from France, as a matter of fact we produce more butter per animal than the French farmers do at the present time. France also is an importer of butter as well as an exporter; and if you place salt butter on one side, she imports decidedly more fresh butter than she exports. I have given these figures rather at length to the Committee, but with regard to the imports and exports I think these are important matters to consider in dealing with the capacity of France. France is not a self maintaining country. Her food imports for the last two years have largely exceeded her food exports. They were last year 1,485,000,000 francs, and the exports were 669,000,000 francs, showing that more than half as much is imported as is exported in the way of food. Of course just now the imports are very probably swollen by the necessity that France is under, and which we sometimes forget, of importing a great quantity of wine at the present time. But, in the case of cattle, there are some very remarkable figures. I find that France (and this is very often forgotten) has an excess of imports over exports in the case of cattle. She has largely reduced that excess by the duties imposed first in 1885, and then in addition in 1887, but the excess has ranged, until the imposition of those duties, from 100,000 to 250,000 head in the last 20 years. In the case of sheep, the excess of importation over exportation in France is very remarkable. I found in the Paris market, when I was over there last autumn, sheep of nearly every nation: Russian sheep, Hungarian sheep, Austrian sheep, apparently many sheep also come from Roumania and Servia, and a great quantity of Algerian sheep. Without taking into account the Algerian supply, which is not foreign of course in France, it is regarded as Colonial, France imports quite twice as many sheep as we do, ranging from 1,500,000 to 2,300,000 some years ago, and in 1885, which is the last year in the official returns I am quoting, to 1,925,000. Beyond that again there has been a very great increase in fresh meat imported into France; in 1873 there were only 974,000 kilograms, which in 1885 had risen to 7,538,000, or eight times the amount. We cannot regard either France or

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

Belgium as countries that are maintaining their own population at the present time. The Belgian importation is very considerable, as has been pointed out in a Return recently presented to Parliament showing the excess of imports over exports. I find that in the case of oxen, sheep, and pigs, there is an excess in every item; and in the case of meat there is an excess also (although Belgium exports meat from her own ports to England at the present time). If it is desired, the figures in the case of the large Belgian importation can be put in. I should like, however, before completing my evidence, to add to it some statistics with regard to the sources of food imports in our own country, and that is the only remaining statement that I will trouble the Committee with.

5082. I was going to ask you first about the butter imported from France; you have told us that France is not a self-supporting country; but we import a large quantity of butter from France?—Yes. The butter imports at the present time to this country, taking the weights in hundredweights for the year 1886, which I think has been mentioned as the year in which a large amount of produce came into this country, I find that the butter import was altogether 1,500,000 cwts., of which France supplied 400,000, Denmark 400,000, and Holland about 360,000; the imports from the other countries being insignificant. Those are the countries supplying us with butter. And upon that point I should rather like to mention to the Committee what has come under my cognizance in relation to the sources of that butter import. It has been suggested that this is one source of supply which the small holding countries can more readily furnish; but I find that imports of French butter come to our markets not so much because of a large production, but because of the extremely uniform class of butter that can be brought. That butter is given this uniformity, rather from great factories than from individual proprietors; and it is by merging the interests of individuals in co-operative societies, that that result has come about. In Denmark particularly, that has been attended to largely; in the last 10 years great efforts have been made there to promote agricultural education, and also the grouping of farmers; and it is solely due to such arrangements that the export of butter is possible in Denmark.

5083. I understand you to say that the butter in Denmark is produced by small farms?—Yes, with regard to milk; by what we should call small farms, but not so small as in France. The annual exports of butter from Denmark rose from 19,000,000 lbs. to 32,000,000 lbs. between 1882 and 1887, in five years time; but this is largely due to great combination, and to the mechanical use of cream separators, which are used in all the co-operative dairies; there are about 200 dairies of the kind in Denmark at the present time, and those dairies use every day the milk of from 5,000 to 6,000 cows; so that it is hardly a specimen of small farming, although in some districts the milk is produced by the small farmers and brought into the factories, where it is manipulated and manufactured into the only attractive shape for export. In France the Normandy butter is largely made, also in the same way

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

by combination, and in factories. The extension of butter-making there is due more to the use of machinery and combination than to any other matter; and the danger of reliance on small culture and an uninstructed peasantry for butter has been pointed out by Sir Lyon Playfair very forcibly on this point in reference to Canon Bagot's efforts to increase the supply of Irish butter. He says, "The age of domestic manufacture is passed. The conditions under which agricultural products can be manufactured by combination and machinery have been established. Creameries, and butter and cheese factories abroad succeed because they are conducted under manufacturing organisation, and not by isolated domestic producers." On that point I should, I think, account for part of the imported butter by the falling off in the quantity of Irish butter.

5084. I was going to ask you upon that, whether you think that dairy farming upon the small holdings in this country could be profitably carried out?—With regard to the production of milk, I think that a good deal might be done by increasing the number of cows in this country, which I should like to see done; but as regards the manufacture of butter or cheese for the great consuming markets, I do not think that very small farmers have as good a chance as the larger men; nor do I think that the sanitary conditions of the manufacture of butter, particularly on very small farms, are at all conducive to a good article being turned out. You find in Ireland milk for butter kept in the living room with the tenants, and even with the animals; and it is said milk is kept in basins and bowls, actually under their beds; and you meet with various other circumstances which in the case of small peasant holdings make the small peasant's butter not of the best quality.

5085. And, in your opinion, could co-operation be carried out in regard to butter-making in this country?—I think that a great deal more co-operation might be carried out; but, at the same time, small men may have to depend on the middleman, who abroad takes a large proportion of the profits. While I was in Paris, I heard great complaints of the men who worked the combination with regard to eggs, to the effect that they give a very small price to the producer, and charge a very large price to the consumer. It is not possible in all cases for small farmers to do their own marketing.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5086. Did I rightly understand you to speak of a deterioration in the quality of Irish butter?—That is the impression that I have gathered.

Chairman.

5087. I think there is only one thing more that you wish to bring out in your examination in chief?—I have here a further statement, with regard to our imports, and perhaps I may be allowed to mention that I have looked generally into the question of what proportion of our food imports are of the class which I have just named, and which it is possible to attribute to small farm countries. Dealing generally, I would like to put this before the Committee, that the food imports of this country consist of something like 125,000,000 *l.* a year; but that the imports of wheat,

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Chairman—continued.

wheat, flour, grain, and meat, are by far the largest portion of that amount. The import supposed to be specially attributable to small farm countries is perhaps not more than one pound in six, only butter (most of the cheese comes from America), poultry, game, fruit, eggs, and vegetables. Our markets attract these, as our large non-agricultural population is better off and consume more. In part they come too from countries which themselves import those articles. And upon the point of vegetables I have observed that considerable imports are made into this country, but that they are very often to a large extent from countries which supply them earlier than we can grow them here. Thus, taking the Manchester market and making an inquiry, as was done in the "Royal Agricultural Society's Journal" of a few years ago, into the dates at which different countries contribute to that market, I found that green peas come first of all from Algiers, then from Spain, then from France; and that all this must come before any can be obtained from English farms; English produce come fourth, from the Worcestershire district, and Nottinghamshire, and then the North of England. In the same way with potatoes; they first receive them from France, and then from Cornwall and the Scilly Islands, and from Jersey, then from the immediate neighbourhood, and then from the North of Scotland. In the case of carrots, it was the same thing; they come first from France, then from Holland, and then from our own counties.

5088. In other words, the greater part of the

Chairman—continued.

imports of vegetables are such as cannot be competed with in this country?—A very large portion of the vegetables and fruit that are imported come in an untimely manner, before their season; so that there is practically no competition with regard to that class of vegetable; it would be very difficult, at all events, to establish a very great extension of market gardening, except in limited areas.

5089. I need hardly ask you whether where there is competition, you find that our old friend the railway rates have stood very much in the way of the English producer?—I made a note to the effect that a great many foreign vegetables have continued to come after the date we could grow them here, because it is possible to bring them over at a very low figure; and this figure is extremely low in the case of produce delivered in the interior, as well as produce delivered in London; for example, speaking of potatoes, to which I referred just now, it appears that in one case they could be brought from Belgium to Manchester (according to the article that I quoted from before) for 14 *s.* per ton, whereas it costs 16 *s.* 6 *d.* to bring them across from Lincolnshire; they can come for 22 *s.* 6 *d.* all the way from Hamburg, and even from the South of France for 35 *s.* And, of course, the import of potatoes depends upon the crop of the year; it differs enormously in different years, and, of course, upon the price here. If that is high they are brought from very distant points.

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Friday, 31*st May* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. CHARLES BIDWELL, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

5090. YOU are a Land Agent and Surveyor, I think?—I am.

5091. Where do you practice?—At Ely and Cambridge.

5092. You are also an agent for some of the colleges at Cambridge, I believe?—Yes; for several of the colleges, and for the Dean and Chapter of Ely. I act also for Lord Cadogan, and the Duke of Portland as regards his Norfolk property, and several other landowners.

5093. You have had a large experience in the management of land?—Yes, I have had large estates under my management.

5094. In what part of the country?—Chiefly the eastern counties, and my experience extends into the midland districts, and also down to Dorsetshire and to the west a little.

5095. What class of farms do you find to be most easily disposed of to tenants?—At the present time I find farms ranging from 100 to under 300 acres to be more readily let; the larger holdings of 500 acres and upwards are extremely difficult to let; there appears to be no desire at present on the part of tenant farmers to invest their capital in large holdings.

5096. Therefore it is rather to the advantage than otherwise of landlords to divide their estates into comparatively small holdings, is it not?—So far as it can be done. Recently, in dealing with one or two properties belonging to one of the colleges at Cambridge, a farm which we had had in hand some few years I managed to let by breaking it up into two or three holdings, of, say from 40 to 70 acres. The difficulty in such a case, of course, is as regards the buildings. We have put up cheap buildings at a reasonable outlay and managed to secure tenants by that means.

5097. But I suppose that generally the landlords are unable to provide the buildings necessary for the sub-division of estates?—That is very often the case.

5098. Is the absence of building due to the previous consolidation of farms, or have the buildings never existed?—The buildings in many cases have never existed, for it is common in

Chairman—continued.

farms of from 300 to 400 acres to have the buildings in the village, for instance, or in the centre of the homestead; and if you break it up you have not buildings for the portions into which you cut it up.

5099. The owners of land are enabled under the existing Acts, are they not, to borrow money for the purpose of erecting buildings?—Yes; they can borrow money from the Lands Improvement Companies.

5100. Why are not those facilities more generally adopted?—In the last few years my experience is that they have been availed of a good deal by landowners. They have been obliged, in many cases, to borrow money for the purpose of the erection of buildings. Of course the colleges are a little different, they have, in some cases, a sinking fund of their own from which they can provide means for the erection of buildings.

5101. Do you find the terms upon which money can be borrowed such as to justify landowners in incurring the expenditure?—I have not found any difficulty on that score.

5102. You have said that the tendency is to create small holdings where it can be done without heavy additional outlay for new buildings; but if the new buildings can be provided for by borrowing money from the Land Improvement Companies, where is the difficulty?—Money borrowed from the Land Improvement Companies and invested in buildings must be invested in buildings of a specific character; that is, of a most substantial and costly character. Very often in these small holdings you do not want to put up costly buildings, but you want to put them up at a very reasonable outlay. For instance, in the farms which I now have in my mind, we have put up light timber buildings covered with corrugated roofing, cheap buildings. If a man gets a farm of 50 or 60 acres, and borrows money from the Land Improvement Companies, and puts on buildings at a cost of 300*l.* or 400*l.*, his rent is pretty nearly swallowed up in the interest he has to pay.

5103. Do you know of any case in your own experience in which a landlord has been prevented

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Chairman—continued.

vented from dividing the estate owing to the cost of building?—I cannot say that I do.

5104. What have you to say as to the class of tenants upon small holdings?—My experience of these small tenants is that they are very industrious and thrifty people; the difficulty with them, as a rule, is the want of capital in first starting their farming; I mean by that, the difficulty in paying the incoming valuation, and finding the capital to stock the farm properly to start with.

5105. What is your experience as to the productiveness of the farms under these tenancies?—So far as the cleanliness of the land is concerned, and the working of it, I think it is worked better in proportion than the larger farms; I do not say that the productiveness is so great; perhaps it is, because there is not the quantity of artificial manure, and things of that kind employed by small holders; but every foot of ground, so to speak, is made the most of; there is no waste, and there is more labour put into the land in the way of keeping it clean and working it.

5106. Taking into account the fact that a small tenant would cultivate every portion of his holding to the best advantage, do you think that that would compensate for any deficiency in the way of capital outlay?—You cannot get a return from land (as I know from having a large farm myself) unless you put a considerable amount into it; and that is the difficulty with the small man; he does not make his manure, I mean his farmyard dung, to the best advantage, and he is not able to find money for artificial manures, and things of that kind, to get the most out of the soil.

5107. I think you have some particulars as to occupations in the parish of Soham, with which you are acquainted?—I have; the parish of Soham is a parish very well known to me; it is in Cambridgeshire, halfway between Ely, where I reside, and Newmarket. It contains 12,526 acres; and there are 195 occupiers of under one acre (these are chiefly small gardens, with which I need not trouble you); there are 77 occupiers of plots under five acres; there are 34 occupiers of plots under 10 acres; there are 43 occupiers of plots under 20 acres; and there are 57 occupiers of plots under 50 acres. There is a considerable quantity of this land occupied by little men who own the fee. I may say I know the parish very well indeed, and I am intimately connected with it. These little men where they own the land have not done so well, nor have they stood the bad seasons as well as the men who rent the land.

5108. We will come to that point again directly; but altogether, summarising the analysis, how many occupiers are there in all?—There are 211 occupiers of holdings, ranging from five acres to 50, and comprising a total area of 2,895 acres.

5109. I understand you wish to hand in that analysis?—Yes. (*The same is handed in.*)

5110. What is the average size of the holdings included in that analysis?—About 13¼ acres; these are held at a rateable value of 8,152 *l.* You may take the rateable value as being a very good index of the letting value; if anything, it would be under the letting value; that works out at 56 *s.* 6 *d.* an acre. I am trustee for a large property in that parish, and I know as a matter of fact that a great deal of land is let to small men at 50 *s.* to 3 *l.* an acre, and some higher than 3 *l.*

5111. Is it specially good land?—It is very good land, accessible to good roads, and convenient to the railway; the parish is, curiously enough, an uninclosed parish. A great many of these small strips of land under an acre in size, lie in different parts of the parish. It is very extraordinary how these little men have struggled and worked through the bad times we have experienced lately.

5112. How does their success or failure contrast with that of larger owners; which class of tenants, in your opinion, has done best?—I should think the little men have done the best lately, for this reason; a great deal of the produce goes into Newmarket in the shape of green crops, carrots, roots, and things of that kind, and they find in that way they can readily sell off their root crops. They grow potatoes and other root crops of that kind.

5113. I was just going to ask you how the land was cultivated; what the produce was?—They grow very little white straw; they grow more potatoes, carrots, mangold-wurtzel, green crops, and also clover and artificial grasses for mowing for the purpose of sale; it is nearly all sold off.

5114. Do those men get their subsistence from the land, or have they other occupations?—A great many of them are almost dependent upon the holding, others do a little hackney carting, and some of them are small coal merchants who retail coal or do anything they can turn their hand to. I think there is one element which I ought to mention as regards this parish. In the parish of Soham there are 238 acres of unenclosed common land where these men are allowed to turn out their horses and cattle. That is a substantial help to them in keeping their stock.

5115. You said that the tenants do better than the actual owners on these small holdings?—I think so.

5116. To what do you attribute that?—I think that is chiefly on account of the owner as a rule having a heavy mortgage on his land, and having to meet the interest upon it; his capital is locked up in the purchase of the land. Very often the land in these cases has come down from father to son with a very heavy burden upon it, and also very often there are charges in respect of the original purchase made upon the land to pay other members of the family; and you sometimes find when a man dies his son is left with a heavy burden round his neck and a mortgage existing upon the land.

5117. Does the burden amount to more than the rent would do of, say 3 *l.* an acre?—I can hardly answer that question from my own knowledge; I only know, as a matter of fact, that the small owners are as a rule not so well off as the others. Of course I do not know the exact details of what the burdens are, but I attribute it to that.

5118. Do you know what they pay in the way

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Chairman—continued.

way of interest for the money advanced upon the buildings?—A small holding of, say 10, 15, or 20 acres in Soham would make 70 *l.* or 80 *l.* an acre. I have known such land make as much as 100 *l.* an acre; and if a man were to buy a holding of that sort he would be put in a miserable position, he would have to pay down a deposit, and he would probably go to a local solicitor to get the money raised, and that would be a drag upon him.

5119. Let us follow that out a little; supposing that he paid 70 *l.* an acre for his land, and suppose he were able to borrow the whole of it, that at 4 per cent. would be 2 *l.* 8 *s.* per acre, would it not?—That is so.

5120. That would be less than the rent, and therefore he would get an advantage as compared with a tenant who had to pay 3 *l.* an acre for rent?—But you must remember he has to provide everything in the shape of any improvement which he wants.

5121. So has the tenant, has he not?—Not entirely; in matters of drainage, and things of that sort they get tiles found them; and very often they get a little assistance in bad seasons in the shape of a reduction.

5122. I do not want to press you further than your knowledge goes; but I do not at present see why an owner should be at a disadvantage as compared with a tenant?—I only know that is so as a matter of fact. I cannot entirely explain the reason; the way in which you put it is very strong; according to those figures it does not make the payment more than the little men could afford to give. Of course there is this further point, that the man, if he is an owner, is tied to the bit of land, and he cannot get away. If he is a tenant, and he finds that the land does not answer his purpose, he can give it up and go elsewhere.

5123. Do you find that the sense of ownership is a stimulus to industry?—I venture to think not. I find, as a rule, these little men would prefer hiring to buying; that is my experience.

5124. I think you have another typical parish to which you wish to call attention in the Isle of Ely?—Yes; that is the parish of Chatteris, on the borders of the Fens, on the north-west side of the county; it lies between St. Ives and Peterborough.

5125. Will you give us the particulars of that parish?—The land is rich loam, a good deal of it being alluvial soil, lands which have been reclaimed. The parish contains 12,990 acres; the gross value is 30,616 *l.*, and the rateable value is 26,158 *l.* In this parish there are from about 75 to 80 small occupiers farming from 15 to 50 acres (but you may take it, not exceeding 50 acres); these small men pay from 45 *s.* to 50 *s.* an acre rent for the land; and in addition they pay tithe and drainage taxes, which I have ascertained amount to 17 *s.* an acre.

5126. May I ask what is the rent of the larger farms in the neighbourhood?—The rent of the larger farms in Chatteris would be from 30 *s.* to 40 *s.* an acre at present.

5127. Then it is very much to the advantage of the landlord, other things being equal, to have small tenants rather than large?—Quite so; but you must bear in mind that this particular land which these little men occupy is the best land in the parish.

5128. You mean that the land let at 30 *s.* would not be so good on the average as the land let for 50 *s.*?—Nothing like so good.

5129. Still, making allowance for the differences in the quality of the land, the rent would be higher, would it not, from a small farm than from a large one?—Certainly. You may take it as being 30 per cent. higher at least.

5130. And in spite of the higher rents the tenants manage to live?—Yes, they are prosperous; they grow a good deal of roots, and send their roots to the London and Manchester markets; I had some of the little men up the other day, and went into the matter with them. As a rule, they find their own buildings.

5131. I was just going to ask where those tenants live?—They live in the town of Chatteris. Some of their lands are a mile and a half, or in some cases as much as two miles from the place where they live, and they go backwards and forwards from the town to the land.

5132. Are there no buildings upon the land?—Only a few little shanties, but nothing you would call buildings; most of their buildings are at the back of their homes in the town.

5133. You say that they provide their own buildings?—Yes.

5134. Do you mean that they erect them themselves, or that they rent them?—They rent a cottage, perhaps, and put up little rough places at the back of the cottage; and in some instances they are on the land itself.

5135. Will you finish what you were saying about Chatteris: are there any common lands in that parish?—No.

5136. Have there been any inclosures?—Chatteris was inclosed in the early part of the century. The great point with regard to these little men in Chatteris doing so well is the adaptability of the land for roots, and for what I may almost call market garden produce that goes away to Manchester and London and other large centres.

5137. Is there a great demand for these small holdings?—Undoubtedly.

5138. Is there any difficulty in getting a vacant farm taken?—Certainly not, in the case of small farms, and if you cut up a large one into small pieces, you find there are applications for it at once.

5139. I understand that your experience is very favourable to small holdings on the whole?—Yes, as regards the letting of small holdings.

5140. Your experience is very favourable to small tenancies?—Yes.

5141. And I do not understand that it is unfavourable to small ownerships; it is only that you think they are not so successful as small tenancies?—I do not see my way to small ownerships.

5142. Am I to understand that you do not think they can be made successful?—I am not prepared to say that. I do not think there is a demand for small ownerships at present in my district.

5143. Under

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Chairman—continued.

5143. Under these circumstances, do you consider that it is desirable that small holdings (meaning by that small tenancies) should be increased?—I certainly do, under the present circumstances.

5144. That would be both in the interests of the landowners, and in the interests of the tenants themselves?—Yes, it would be.

5145. Do you consider that any additional facilities should be given for the acquisition of small holdings?—It is very difficult to see how to advance money to men who are in the position in which many of these men are; but if by the wisdom of Parliament some means could be devised to find them capital to start with in the occupation of small holdings, I think it might be an advantage; I revert again to what I said at the commencement, that in my experience we have allowed in several instances men to take small farms, allowing their valuation to stand over; that is to say, letting them pay it by degrees. The colleges have, in some cases, given a man time to pay his incoming valuation; that is to say, what he has to take when he enters a tenancy; that cannot be done, as a rule, by private individuals; because they are not in a position to advance the money in that way. If a man could be assisted in that way in entering upon his land it might lead to success.

5146. But in that case the person who advances the money has no security upon the land?—He has only the security that if the man leaves he will be entitled to be paid any compensation for unexhausted improvements which he leaves behind; that would be due from the owner of the land or from his incoming tenant.

5147. You have suggested the possibility of the State advancing the money for the purchase of the improvements on the land; in that case the State would have no security upon the land?—That is so undoubtedly.

5148. The advance would have to made upon the security of the improvements?—Yes.

5149. And the improvements might depreciate in the hands of the tenant to whom the advance was made?—I think that is so; I will not say dangerous, but somewhat risky, certainly.

5150. Do you know of a case in which the State has advanced money except upon the security of the land?—I am not aware of such a case certainly.

5151. Is there any difficulty in obtaining land for the purposes of small tenancies at present?—There are a great many farms at the present time which one is cutting up into small holdings as much as possible.

5151*. The difficulty that arises is the question of buildings. I understood you to say that, in your experience, the demand was greater than the present supply?—I will not go so far as that; there is a decided demand for little occupations; and in many instances where it is possible to do so, landowners are taking advantage of that demand, and are making their farms suitable for the purposes of small holdings.

5152. If the demand is not greater than the supply, there is no need for further facilities?—Quite so.

Chairman—continued.

5153. And yet I understood you to say that you would be in favour of further facilities being given if they could be given on safe and economical principles?—Yes. What I mean is: if you can assist a little man with a small capital in taking land it would be an advantage, because, I believe, these small men are thrifty and industrious, only very often they are not in a position to start a small farm.

5154. I want you to distinguish between the difficulty of obtaining land, and the difficulty of obtaining capital to work it; I want first to ask you whether you think it desirable that any additional facilities should be given to enable these people to get upon the land?—I confess I do not see how it could be done.

5155. Do you think that there is a need for it, supposing that it could be done?—It would be an advantage to the small man, but I not see the practical working of it.

5156. Supposing that powers were given to a local authority to obtain land for the purpose of letting it in small holdings, in which case the local authority would take the place of the impecunious landowner and would be able to do what perhaps an impecunious landowner could not do; that would be one means of supplying land at any rate, would it not?—Yes.

5157. Would that be a desirable thing, in your opinion?—I understand the proposal you are putting to be to extend, as it were, the allotment system to small holdings. It is quite possible that that would work; I do not say it would not. I think, however, you will not find the little men coming forward to take land; I do not think you would find the demand to purchase among the little men.

5158. I am confining my questions at present to small tenancies; but I understand you to say that you think you would have to go further if any result were to be obtained, and that you would have to find the capital for working the land as well?—In many cases you would. There are numbers of men willing to give labour and attention to the land who have not the means to do so. If those men could be put in a better position, and have an opportunity of taking land, they would do good to the State by making the land more productive; but the difficulty is to find some means to do that.

5159. Do you not think that if a small cultivator could always find land at a fair price, arranged in small holdings for his convenience, that would be a great stimulus to the class from which the small holders come, to save money in order to start in such an enterprise?—It would be so, no doubt.

5160. And, therefore, if there were a full supply of land, one might expect that advantage would be taken of the facilities in the first instance by the better class of labourers and tenants, and the whole class might thereby be raised?—Quite so.

5161. As regards the quantity of land which should be set aside for small holdings, how much do you think would be necessary for a man who has to derive his whole subsistence from the land?—It depends of course upon what the land is; if it is a rich productive soil, a man might live on

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Chairman—continued.

from say, 20 to 30 acres. I know instances where men are doing that now. Of course if the soil was of a poorer character, a man would want more land to keep him.

5162. I suppose that if you were to try and fix a limit, it would be better fixed in money rent than in acreage, because the money rent would have some reference to the quality of the soil?—Quite so.

5163. At what rent do you think a man could live upon the land alone?—Of course the rent would depend so much upon the quality of the land. Good land at a high rent would be cheaper for such a man than poor land at a cheaper rent; it is not altogether a question of what he pays in rent, but the amount of the productiveness of the land that he has to consider.

5164. The amount he pays in rent depends upon the productiveness of the land, does it not?—Yes.

5165. What annual rent do you fix as being the rent which represents the quantity and quality of land upon which a man could live?—A man could get a living off 30 acres of land at, say 2 *l.* an acre; that is a rental of 60 *l.* a year would represent it.

5166. Or such larger quantity of land as could be got at from 50 *l.* to 60 *l.* a year?—Yes. I have an instance in my mind; that of a little man who is a tenant of mine, pays 30 *l.* a year. He lives off that lands really, and his rent is always forthcoming when the rent-day comes round; he is never in arrear a penny.

5167. You would fix a limit at everything above 30 *l.* a year rent?—Yes; I think it should not be below that.

5168. I think you have some particulars as to the production of the land and the crops grown and so on, upon these small holdings; could you give us those particulars?—I have here a pattern case of a small farm in Chatteris, of a man occupying 19 acres of land. I saw that man myself, and I asked him about the facts. He has a wife and eight children, three of whom are out in the world and at service; but five are living at home with him. He occupies, as I say, 19 acres of land, and that is the only means of living that he has. The land is cropped in this way: last year (1888) he had eight acres of oats, six acres of carrots, and five acres of potatoes; the oats are kept for the use of the horse (he keeps one horse), and the straw is used for manure; the carrots and potatoes go to London or Manchester. This year, taking the same land, the eight acres of oats have been succeeded by eight acres of carrots, and the six acres of carrots have been succeeded by three acres of early potatoes, three acres of mangold wurtzels; and the five acres of potatoes have been succeeded by five acres of wheat. The land is beautifully clean and thoroughly well-cultivated, as far as the cleanliness is concerned. It would be better it it had more stimulants put into it. That is the way they carry on that land. That is about a typical case.

5169. Going back to the difficulty of finding the buildings, do you think that that could be got over if the tenant were allowed to erect his buildings himself, with the certainty that he would be compensated for improvements if he left?—I do. And I think that a very strong point with these small men. Taking the case I have just quoted, for instance, the fear on the part of that man is that the property may change hands, and that what he has put into it in the shape of improving the soil and buildings he may lose. If you can give these men something in the shape of security of tenure for a time, and security for what buildings they may erect and what improvements they may make, you would do a great deal to encourage these small holders.

5170. But I understand you are not in favour of giving them facilities to become owners?—I am not.

5171. Of course, if they become owners that would do away altogether with all the difficulty about improvements?—Quite so. One objection I see to ownership is the difficulty that if a man dies and leaves a family, they want to divide his property, whatever it may be; and very often it devolves upon the eldest son to pay his brothers and sisters out of this little portion, the land being left with a heavy mortgage upon it; so that he is in a miserably poor state, and has nothing to carry it on with; whereas if he has money if he goes into the open market he can hire land where he likes.

5172. Have you considered the proposal following the precedent of the Ashbourne Act in Ireland, to lend the incoming tenant the purchase-money or a portion of the purchase-money, and allow him to become the owner in a given number of years?—I do not think that we want that in England; I do not see the necessity for it.

5173. Would that be open to the objections which you have taken? In the first place, I would point out that in that case the tenant would not have to find the capital, consequently they would not be burdened in the first instance?—Quite so.

5174. In the next place he or his successor would be ultimately the owner, and that would enable him to deal as he liked with his property in the event of his death, or of the necessity of making provision for his children?—Yes. There is every opportunity for a man to acquire land in this country at a low rent if he has the means and desire to do so.

5175. Is there an opportunity to acquire it without capital?—I do not think there ought to be. I do not think you out to give an opportunity for a man to acquire things which he has not the means for; if you do it for one class of the community you may be asked to do it for another.

5176. It has been done in Ireland, has it not?—Yes; but I suppose there were extremely special circumstances for it there.

5177. Do you know anything of the result of the experiment in Ireland?—I have read about it, and studied the question somewhat; but I am not prepared to give an opinion.

5178. You have no personal knowledge of the conditions of purchase under Lord Ashbourne's Act, have you?—No. My point is that if you find the capital to purchase land the same thing might arise in other occupations, and a man, for instance,

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Chairman—continued.

instance, might ask that you should find the capital to put him into a shop, or start him in any other business.

5179. Your objection is a general objection on principle I may call it; but you have no practical objection to put before the Committee, as I understand?—I think you may take it that it is a general objection. I really do not myself follow the argument that the State should find the money to make a man an owner in this country.

5180. But if it should be to the interest of the State to develop and re-create a class of the population, which according to your own experience is a most amiable class of the population, would not that justify the State in offering these exceptional facilities?—It might do. I do not say it would not. I confess I cannot see my way to it.

5181. I wanted to know whether over and above a theoretical objection you have any practical objection to such a proposal; for instance, do you think that the State would lose if they were to advance three-fourths of the purchase-money?—I should think that they would run great risk of doing so in a great many instances, because you could not discriminate between the thrifty man and the man who was a ne'er-do-weel; you would have to take anybody who chose to come forward, I take it.

5182. If the condition were that the man should find one-fourth of the purchase-money, that would be a guarantee that he was not altogether unthrifty, would it not?—Certainly; that would make some hold upon him. But I think you would find in this country there would be no demand on the part of people to buy small property in that way; my experience, as regards the feeling in the Eastern Counties, is that they are willing to occupy, but they do not care to purchase. You might, perhaps, stir up a desire to purchase in the way you suggest.

5183. When these small freeholds come into the market, is there no demand for them?—It depends a good deal upon where they are; if they are near large estates the tendency in past years has been to buy them, but that tendency is falling through in consequence of the present depreciation of land.

5184. Are there any of these small freeholds going begging now in your neighbourhood?—No, not where the land is good.

5185. Where the land is good they are bought up?—Yes.

5186. Although at present there are none of these additional or exceptional facilities?—Quite so.

5187. And the purchaser has to find the whole of the capital, whether he borrows or finds it himself?—Yes; I may say that the key of all this question of small holdings is, that it is the best land that is taken. You get no inferior land where these small holdings are. In both of the parishes I mentioned the land is of an exceptionally good quality, excellent land. If you had a lot of inferior land to cut up for small holdings you would not find that the people would care about taking it.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

5188. With regard to your last answer is it not the case that if there are no small holdings to be got in the neighbourhood where there is light land, rather than have none at all men would take the light land?—It is a case of Hobson's choice; they get that or none, I take it; but I think that experience goes to show, as a rule, that poor light land is not so adaptable for small holdings.

5189. But still, as a matter of fact, in some portions of the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, where there is light land, there are small holdings, are there not?—Yes.

5190. And even there the tenants do well?—Yes, they do; they must have a larger area to occupy in the case of lighter land.

5191. In your immediate vicinity, round Ely, March, Wisbech, and St. Ives, I take it there is a demand for small holdings in the vicinity of all towns, is there not?—Yes.

5192. Whenever land of a good character comes into the market there are always people ready to take the holdings?—Yes.

5193. At the present time, even with the agricultural depression, there it a demand for them?—Yes, that is so.

5194. Does that demand arise principally from small tradesmen, many of whom have one pony or a couple of ponies, or one horse?—Partly, but not entirely; a good many of them would be men who have been bailiffs on farms or engaged in pursuits other than agriculture. For instance, small carters and people of that class are always willing and anxious to take a small holding.

5195. And are there cases of labourers who work their way up to become bailiffs and stewards, who have saved money, and who are then in a position to take small holdings?—That is so.

5196. I do not think that you gave the Chairman any evidence as regards market gardening; it is the fact that market gardening is increasing, is it not?—Undoubtedly.

5197. And that there are at present greater improved facilities for the sale of roots, vegetables, fruit, &c.?—Quite so, and we hope to get improved rates to get our produce to market cheaper, and that will enhance the value.

5198. The almost prohibitive railway rates is really one of the great stumbling blocks to the further development of market gardening, is it not?—That is so.

5199. In your experience have you found that the rents of small holdings are paid regularly?—I find them very well paid, as a rule.

5200. And they do not ask for abatements as is the case of the larger farmers?—Not to the same extent. They are, as a rule, a very honest and thrifty class of men anxious to pay their way. I may just mention that in the parish of Soham, where I receive the tithes, the tithes amount to 2,300 *l.* a year, and the little men will attend at the tithe-audit and pay with fair regularity; but I cannot say as much for some of the large farmers.

5201. The larger farmers ask for a time?—They do.

5202. Has the Allotment Act, in your opinion, given an impulse to the small holding movement?

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

ment?—Yes. I think it may have to a certain extent; it has opened the eyes of the little men to the possibility of getting hold of more land; I think that there is something in that.

5203. Then upon the question of compensation, do you find that the Agricultural Holdings Act meets the case of occupiers who are giving up small holdings; do you think it works satisfactorily in the way of buildings and compensation for improvements?—No, I do not. I think it is too complicated an Act for a little man dealing with these little cases. If something could be devised in the way of the Land Commissioners appointing a man of some position to deal with the question of compensation I think it would be a good thing. The Agricultural Holdings Act is beyond these small men; they do not understand how they are to be compensated under the Act; the machinery is too complicated for them.

5204. And it is too expensive?—It is too expensive.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

5205. You told us that in the case of some property belonging to the colleges at Cambridge, for whom you have acted, you have recently broken up some large farms, and converted them into small ones?—Yes.

5206. What did you do in the matter of buildings?—I put up in two or three instances cheap buildings of light construction, timber buildings with corrugated roofs of a cheap kind, sufficient to answer the purposes of these little men.

5207. Did you have in that case to build a farmhouse for the men to live in?—No, in no case have I had to build a farmhouse. The men live in the village, and go backwards and forwards to the land.

5208. You gave us some interesting details with regard to the parish of Soham: who are the landlords there?—The land there is a great deal in the hands of small people; there are no very large owners; there are only eight farms under 500 acres, and only three farms over 500 acres.

5209. I understand that there are large numbers of small occupying tenants there; but to whom does the land which they occupy belong?—There are one or two trust estates, and one or two owners owning largish portions; but the parish being an inclosed one, and the land lying out in those very little strips in open field, the ownership is very much split up.

5210. With regard to Chatteris, what is the history of the land there; did that belong to small owners?—No; there are several large owners in Chatteris.

5211. Do you find in that village that the owners are perfectly willing to let their land in small tenancies?—They are willing to do so at once.

5212. And glad to do so?—And glad to do so.

5213. Is it your general experience of the Eastern Counties and Cambridgeshire that the landowners are ready and willing to split their land up into small farms?—Whenever they can manage it in the present day they are anxious to do so, because it is of advantage to them.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

5214. With regard to the position of Chatteris, is it a near market?—It is a small market town itself; it has a first-class railway station, and generally the land adjoins good roads, and is very accessible.

5215. The land is good there?—Very good indeed.

5216. So that in both the cases you have given us I may take it that the land is good, and the position is good?—Yes.

5217. And the railway facilities are good?—There are railway facilities in both cases.

5218. And there is a market close to it?—The market is within a reasonable distance. Chatteris is itself a small market town.

5219. How far is Soham from Newmarket?—Six miles; and six miles from Ely. Ely is an important market there.

5220. What is the nearest town to Chatteris?—St. Ives; it lies between St. Ives and March, and about twelve miles from Huntingdon.

5221. With regard to the case you mentioned of the man who occupies the 19 acres, how does he occupy all his time?—He is always at work on the land more or less. I asked him the question myself as to whether he did any hackney carting, and the answer I received was "no hackney carting." Of course with these root crops he gets his carrots off early, and will probably get something on afterwards. He only keeps one horse, and with his own hand-labour he is practically always at work upon the land.

5222. Pulling up weeds, for instance?—Yes, and attending to the land.

5223. How does he occupy all the time of his horse?—There is plenty to do on 19 acres of land with one horse, and with the carting of his produce backwards and forward to the station; because his land lies half-a-mile or three-quarters of a mile from the town, and rather more than a mile from the station; so that he has a good deal to do in the way of shifting.

5224. He does not do carting for anybody, I understand?—He tells me he does not.

5225. Does he let his horse for agricultural purposes to his neighbours?—I believe not.

5226. What does this man do with his wheat?—I cannot say that I discussed the details as to that.

Chairman.

5227. Does he sell it; he does not use it for his own purposes, does he?—I think it is very likely. A good many of these small occupiers do use their own wheat, and have it ground into flour; that is very common with these little men. The labourers are very glad to get their wheat supplied in that way from their employers; for instance, I let the men I employ get the wheat in that way and let them have it ground.

5228. Do they take it to the miller and get it ground?—Yes; they take a comb of wheat from me when they want it. I let my bailiff give it them, and charge them the lowest market price, by way of helping them.

5229. Your market price, I suppose, is regulated by the importation?—Yes; they would save considerably,

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Chairman—continued.

considerably in that way instead of buying their flour from the flour merchant.

5230. Are the five members of this family, who are at home, employed upon the land too?—In all their spare time they would be weeding and doing that kind of thing. Some of them are children at school.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5231. You said that in breaking up land into 40-acre lots the chief difficulty was the provision of separate buildings?—That is an element of expense.

5232. You referred to borrowing money for that purpose from the Land Improvement Company?—Yes.

5233. That is a private company, is it not?—They are private companies.

5234. Subject, to a certain extent, to the supervision of the Land Commissioners, is it not?—That is so.

5235. Is it not the fact that the interest you have to pay that company is comparatively high?—You pay off the loan in so many years; I think you pay off capital and interest in about 30 years.

5236. Is not the interest based upon something like 5 per cent.?—It is more than that.

5237. Is there not a considerable amount of expense in connection with the previous examination in the case of any operation through that company?—Quite so; and you can only put up a certain class of building, and the plans have to be passed by the Land Commissioners.

5238. Altogether the operations through this agency may be taken to be very expensive as regards cost, and not very effective?—They are too costly for these little matters I take it.

5239. In cutting up land into small holdings, if you were to leave the question of the buildings altogether to the tenant or to the holder, would not the difficulty be got over by him?—The tenant would find the buildings of a class of his own in time. I know several instances where a tenant has bought old railway sleepers and put his buildings up with them. That is a very common practice in our part of the world.

5240. What inducement is there for a tenant to put up buildings if he is simply a tenant?—Of course he has to run the risk of having to leave his land and perhaps lose his buildings, and there is not the inducement to build.

5241. Is not that a natural barrier to the holder putting up buildings, or, indeed, doing any improvement that required capital?—It is discouraging to him, undoubtedly.

5242. Would not that discouragement disappear, and in its place an inducement be put if the man became an owner?—Yes; but you would have great difficulty in convincing these men that it is wise for them to become owners; that is the difficulty I see.

5243. But the difficulty with regard to buildings would disappear?—It would disappear with regard to buildings, because the man would be on his own freehold.

5244. You stated that there was extra labour done in small holdings; I think your words were that the land was beautifully clean; can you say

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

that with regard to larger farms?—One hardly likes to discuss too boldly the larger farms in these days; but I may say I should like to see more labour upon a good many of them.

5245. You would admit, at any rate, that it is impossible to get a proper production from the land unless there is sufficient labour?—The more labour, as a rule, the better the land is done with.

5246. Would you say that the labour is as important as, or more important than a sufficiency of manure?—Both are very right and proper; the question of keeping up the fertility of the soil depends more particularly upon the quantity of manure which is put into it; you may very often go on a farm and see good crops grown, and the land not clean.

5247. If it were well manured, and there were a great insufficiency of labour, the manure would be quite as useful to the rubbish on the land, and make the rubbish as fine as the other?—Yes, there is that way of looking at it.

5248. You stated that the small holders at Soham had a common of 230 acres; to whom does that common belong?—There is a common right over the lands; they belong to the parish; it is uninclosed parish; they belong, in fact, to the commoners.

5249. Do they pay anything for that?—I believe there is a very small fee per head for the number of cattle put on.

5250. To whom does that go?—That is arranged at the parish meeting, I believe; I am not quite clear about the details, but it is a very small sum. These commons are no doubt of great utility to the people in turning on their horses and cows, but they are not well managed. They would be very much improved, for instance, by draining and other matters of that kind.

5251. But it still remains an uninclosed parish?—Yes, it is quite an exception, I think; it is about the only such parish in the county of Cambridge.

5252. You mentioned as one of the drawbacks to cultivating ownership the amount of mortgage on the holdings?—Yes, that is very common.

5253. Have you any idea what the interest upon these mortgages would be?—Of course I cannot speak of my own knowledge absolutely; but I know it is common repute that the interest is very high in these small matters very often.

5254. Does it get as high as 6 or 7 per cent.?—I think it does.

5255. Reckoning the method of paying off, does it not get to 10 per cent. sometimes?—I am not aware that it does.

5256. At any rate it is high?—Yes.

5257. You stated that the tenant would be better satisfied to hold as a tenant, provided he had security for his improvements?—Yes, that is the great point with these little men.

5258. Does he consider that he has security now?—He does not consider that he has sufficient security now, very often. For instance, if the owner of the fee dies his property may be sold, and these little men may run the chance of not continuing as tenants, and may lose their improvements.

5259. Do you think that under such circumstances, except from Hobson's choice and sheer

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

necessity, that men will become small holders?—Experience goes to show that they do; whenever there is an opportunity they will take land even with that risk.

5260. What security can you give him except that of ownership; is it possible to give any security that shall be also fair to the landlord, except that of ownership?—I see great difficulty; I do not see how it could be done, excepting perhaps if some means could be devised by which there should be a scale for unexhausted improvements to be settled, and the tenant should be allowed, at any time, compensation for such things in a cheap and simple way when they left the land. As Sir Edward Birkbeck said, it is the cost of working the Agricultural Holdings Act that is the difficulty; and the working of the details of that Act is a matter they do not understand and do not follow.

5261. Do you know Sir Edward Birkbeck's Cottagers' Compensation for Improvements Act?—I cannot say that I do.

5262. You stated that one difficulty with regard to cultivating ownership, in case a man died, would be the embarrassment to his successor; wherein does the disadvantage consist as compared with a man who is tenant of the land?—The owner has got the land tied to him; his all invested in the land itself; but if a man is merely a tenant, he takes his crop and leaves the place; he may also lose the unexhausted improvements and the buildings, but it is not like having the fee.

5263. If an owner dies, of course his successor has always the power of sale in the open market?—Yes.

5264. Consequently, he can get the market price for whatever he has?—Yes.

5265. Therefore, there can be no loss in that case below the market price?—No; but if that land is heavily mortgaged, and he is in the hands of money-lenders or of solicitors, the money he gets is swallowed up paying the interest and costs after he has paid off the mortgage, and nothing is left for his family.

5266. I am assuming that there is no mortgage?—That makes it another case altogether. You find very few of these little men without heavy mortgages upon the land.

5267. If a scheme could be devised where there was no mortgage, in your opinion would a man be better off as tenant or owner?—It would alter the case very much if a man could have the land without any mortgage at all.

5268. In that case, if he was the owner, he could sell and get the highest price in the open market?—Yes.

5269. But let us take the case of a tenant who dies; his successor simply leaves the farm with quite insufficient compensation according to the general account for the improvements he has made upon the land?—You often find in practice that where a tenant dies, his eldest son succeeds him, and he enters into arrangements to pay his brothers and sisters some portion of the value of the stock, and he takes over his father's land.

5270. That would apply to both cases, would it not?—It is true that would apply to both cases.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5271. I am speaking as to the relative position of the cultivating owner and the tenant in the case of death; do you agree that, in the case of the owner, his successor would be able to get the full market value of what he possessed, but that, in the case of the tenant dying, his successor would be at all events liable to get insufficient compensation for the labour and improvements the tenant had put in?—Yes. That quite meets the case that I put when I said that a man ought to have full security for what he has put into the land. I follow the point that you put with regard to the owner; in the case of the owner, he has the open market to sell his goods in, so to speak; he can put the land up and make the best he can of it.

5272. As things stand, do you still hold the opinion on the basis I have just presented, that in the case of a man dying, his successor would be better off if the man had been a tenant than if he had been a cultivating owner?—That is, always provided there is no mortgage upon the property. If the property is mortgaged up to the hilt, it is no advantage to the family when he dies. Subject to the proposition that it is not mortgaged, I think it would be better for a man to be an owner in that case.

5273. You spoke about small holdings being on superior land; according to your experience, is not the tendency of small cultivation to improve land of whatever quality it may be when it is taken?—Yes, I think I may admit that, certainly.

5274. So that comparatively poor land under cultivating ownership has a tendency to improve in value?—Provided always that the man is not holding too much; that is, that he is holding only as much as his capital will permit him to cultivate to the best advantage.

5275. Supposing that a man was owner under a system by which he was only required to pay a small portion of the purchase money, and allow the remainder to remain at a perpetual quit-rent, would that get over the difficulty of absorbing his capital in the purchase, and give him the security that was required?—Under your proposition, would he be in a position to sell the property and divide it?

5276. Yes, but not to underlet it?—It sounds feasible.

5277. Do you happen to know of the Roman tenure of Emphyteusis?—I have read of it many years ago when I was at College.

5278. Under that system the holders were free to enjoy and cultivate the land for ever on the condition that the quit rent was paid, and the owner of the land could never re-enter except in the case of failure of payment?—Yes.

5279. That is a similar tenure to what I am asking you upon, is it not?—It would be quite a new experience in this country; I have not sufficiently studied it to be able to form a judgment as to whether it would be wise to adopt that system or not.

5280. Do you think it would get over the difficulty as to mortgage?—It ought to do so certainly.

5281. And it would get over the difficulty to which you refer of absorbing the capital in the purchase

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

purchase of the property?—It would do, apparantly.

5282. You think that it has a chance of doing so?—Yes; I do not say that I agree with it.

5283. You stated with regard to small holdings that the rental of good land was very much higher than on large holdings, and you said that speaking generally the rents were about 30 per cent. higher?—I think you may take it so, certainly.

5284. It has been stated to us that one reason why men prefer to be tenants is that a landlord lets land at two per cent. profit on its capital value?—Yes.

5285. Is it your experience that the landowner does that?—Not in these cases which I have been mentioning. There is no doubt that they get considerably more than two per cent. from the land in those cases. My experience goes to this: that on a great many large estates we are not getting more than two per cent., and hardly that in some instances; but these little farms are let to pay considerably more than two per cent.

5286. Do you think that it would be nearer six or seven per cent.?—I would go so far as five per cent.

5287. You say that small owners are deficient in capital?—I mean by that that the small owner has locked his capital up in purchasing the land.

5288. But for that fact would he be deficient in capital?—A man would be in a much more advantageous position, occupying as a tenant and using that capital as a tenant rather than locking it up and becoming an owner.

5289. In the case we have been considering, where he is an owner and pays a quit rent so that he is not required to use his capital for the purchase of the land, I think you said the same end would be attained?—Quite so; but in that case I take it that he would have to find some capital at first.

5290. Do you find the larger farms deficient in capital as well as the small ones as a rule?—There is not the capital put into the land lately that there has been in consequence of the capital having gone.

5291. You also gave a typical case of small men being always ready with their rent; may we take it that the small holders are among the best of rent-payers?—I should say they are certainly, as a rule.

5292. Do you think there are more people employed and maintained on, say 10,000 acres of land divided into small holdings, than there would be on a similar area of land in large holdings?—There is not the paid labour on small holdings; you never find a man occupying a small holding who hires labour; he has his own labour and the labour of his children; and he may have an odd man to help him now and then; but, as a rule, he does not employ anybody.

5293. Setting aside the question of hired labour and taking all those employed upon the land, taking the same number of acres, are there a larger number employed on the land where the land is divided into small holdings than there are when it is in larger holdings?—It is a difficult question to answer; you can hardly compare the two cases.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5294. I had not the pleasure of listening to your evidence in chief; but I should like to ask you one question about the man you mentioned as occupying 19 acres; do he and his family live upon the produce of the farm?—Not entirely.

5295. Mainly?—I should think they do to a great extent. They keep no cow; they buy their milk. That is a point I particularly asked him about; I should think that they probably consume their own wheat as was suggested by the honourable Member. But I know that they do no other work, so that they practically live upon the land.

5296. I mean living on it as distinguished from living out of it?—Quite so.

5297. Do you know what the gross profit of the farm is?—No, I cannot tell you; I know this particular man pays 10*l.* a year to a building society which he is in, and he must manage to get a living out of the land, because he has no other source of income. I asked him if he had any money invested elsewhere; and he said, "No, my all is in the land; but I manage to subscribe 10*l.* a year to this building society."

5298. You do not know what the gross or net profit per acre from the farm would be?—No, I did not go into that.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5299. I think you said that when these small freeholds come into the market they are very readily bought up; are they generally bought by men who cultivate them themselves?—They are very rarely bought by men who cultivate them themselves.

5300. As regards this indisposition to buy of which you speak, do you think that that is due to economical causes, or do you think that the custom of the country has anything to do with it?—I should think it is more due to economical causes; I do not think that it pays for these little men to lock up their little capital in that kind of way.

5301. You said that you had no practical experience of the working of the Ashbourne Act, but have you had occasion to meet and talk with people who have visited Ulster or France, or any of those countries where land is very readily bought in this way?—I know France pretty well; but I have not studied the question so far as Ulster is concerned, to which you specially refer.

5302. You say you know France pretty well; is there not a great deal of agriculture in France of a nature which is not altogether very widely different from what you have described as the agriculture of Cambridgeshire, where they cultivate carrots and roots generally?—Yes, that is so, in some parts of France; but when a man dies there his property is cut up into very small pieces, and divided among his family.

5303. Comparing Cambridgeshire with France, do you think that the difference is due to the economical conditions being so different, or is it the custom of the country that is so different?—I think it is that the custom of the country is so different.

5304. Do you think if the custom once grew up of small holdings the greed for land would

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

increase, and that you might have a different condition of things?—I should be very glad to see anything of the kind to start a greater wish for land.

5305. As regards cutting up the land into a number of small tenancies, you say that the great difficulty is with respect to buildings; in these Cambridgeshire valuations which you have referred to, are the buildings included in the purchase of the improvements which are taken over?—No, not as a rule.

5306. That does not come within the Cambridgeshire custom as apart from the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Certainly not.

5307. Do you think that the law might be improved in that respect, so as to give the tenant a better hold over the buildings he has erected? You say at present there is no inducement to a tenant to erect buildings. If the law of fixtures was altered so as to give the tenant the right to carry away his buildings at the end of his term, do you think it would be better?—As a rule the tenant is allowed to take away his buildings if he wishes to do so. It was not so, I admit, a few years ago; but it is becoming more and more general now. Landlords do not now object to a tenant removing his building in such a case.

5308. You say it was not so a few years ago, but it is becoming more and more general now; is that because there is a greater desire to encourage small tenants?—Not necessarily so; but I think people are beginning to see that it is only fair that what a man has put into the land he should have an opportunity of carrying away.

5309. Is it due to an advance in the moral sentiment of the people?—Possibly.

5310. Do you think the law should be made to follow that advance of moral sentiment?—We have done so in the Agricultural Holdings Act which allows a man to be paid for buildings.

5311. Is it rather narrow; do you not think it might go a good deal further?—I think the landlord should have some power of exercising his judgment as to what should be put upon his land; I do not think you ought to pay a man for anything that he chooses to put on the land.

5312. Then you would not suggest any change in the law in this respect?—I do not think it is necessary at present.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

5313. As regards what you said just now: supposing the measure of compensation payable to the tenant was the increased value given to the estate as is the case under the Agricultural Holdings Act in the case of improvements for which he can claim compensation, would not that make the landlord secure in the case of buildings and permanent improvements erected by the tenant?—Provided they are permanent improvements. People differ so much as to what is a permanent improvement.

5314. Supposing it was determined in the same way that other improvements are determined, might not that meet it?—It might be dealt with in that way.

5315. Do you not think that would remove the difficulty that the small tenants have with regard to improving their lands by putting up sheds and buildings?—Yes, my own practice in many cases has been this: a small man may come to me and say, I want to put up a building upon this land, and I say to him, I think you have enough buildings already; but if you put it up I will allow you to take it away when you go.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

5316. Do you not think that the Agricultural Holdings Act might be improved in that sense so as to give the tenant the right?—I think it might.

5317. You said there were instances of very high rates of interest being charged upon mortgages to small tenants: can you give us one?—I carefully guarded myself when Mr. Jesse Collings asked me the question by saying that I did not know of cases of my own knowledge, but I knew that it was common repute that where these little men borrowed money on small occupations they have to pay a high rate of interest. I cannot give you instances.

5318. Can you give us an instance of excessive lawyers' charges; I suppose that is also common repute.

5319. If there was an improved system of transfer of land, such as exists in some of the Colonies and America, would not that meet the difficulty?—I am quite in favour of that.

5320. Do you not think that that would remove some of your objections to small holdings being held by freeholders?—Possibly it might. I think that the simplification of transfer of land is a very desirable end to aim at.

5321. And the simplication of the means of mortgaging, I presume, would follow?—It would quite follow on the same lines.

5322. That, to a certain extent, would remove your objection to having small freeholders?—Yes. I think you will find that the small freeholders will not be forthcoming even after you have given all these advantages. I fancy that they will still prefer to occupy the land.

5323. Still you would think it advisable to give them the chance?—I see no objection at all to doing so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5324. You said that this man of whom you have spoken as occupying 19 acres was able to pay and does pay 10 *l.* a year towards a building society?—Yes, he told me he did.

5325. Do you not think that a man of that kind might like to pay 10 *l.* a year towards acquiring his own freehold, instead of paying it to a building society, if he had an opportunity of doing so?—I put that very question to him; I asked him would he like to buy his own land and he said, "What I would rather like to do is to get adjoining land so as to add to my holding; I would like to double my holding; instead of occupying 19 acres, as I now do, I would like to occupy 40 acres."

5326. Then why does he now pay this money to a building society if he would prefer to add to his land?—Because he has not an opportunity of getting more land adjoining his present holding. If he had an opportunity he would do so.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

5327. Who are his neighbours?—They are, as a rule, small men.

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Mr. EDMUND BECK, is called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

5328. WILL you kindly tell the Committee what your profession is?—My profession is that of a land agent. I have the honour, as you are aware, I believe, of working for His Royal Highness at Sandringham.

5329. You are agent for the Sandringham estate?—Yes. I have occupied that position, and worked for His Royal Highness since the year 1864.

5330. And you are also, I think, in business for yourself?—I am also agent for about 38,000 acres of land in different parts of the country; in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Northamptonshire.

5331. Are there many small holders in your district?—Very few indeed in Norfolk; but that is because the nature and quality of the land is not adapted to them as a rule.

5332. There are some, however?—There are a few; but they are nearer the larger towns, more in the middle of our county towards Dereham and towards Norwich, and in the neighbourhood of Lynn, where there are markets for the produce from those sources.

5333. Are the small holders that there are tenants or proprietors chiefly?—They would be chiefly tenant holders.

5334. In your experience, how do you find that these tenants prosper?—In my own county of Norfolk, as I say, there are so few of them that I can hardly give an opinion. In fact, some few months ago I was asked if I would come up here to give evidence, and I said that from the nature of my business, I did not think that I was the sort of witness that you require. Then I was twitted with this: "Oh, you are like all agents; you like big holdings." I said, "I differ from you entirely; I think that there ought to be farms of all sorts and sizes." And so I have come up here.

5335. As you have had experience in other counties, perhaps in those counties you have more knowledge of small holdings?—Certainly, I have. At the present moment, I am working in Leicestershire, where, of course, the bulk of my work is now amongst small holdings, varying in rentals from 10 *l.* or 15 *l.* to 1,100 *l.*

5336. Dealing with those in the first place, do those small holdings pay more rent than the larger holdings?—Both in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire, certainly they do.

5337. Is the class of tenants a good one?—They are a very good, honest, respectable men; but the bulk of them are very little better than some of our really well-to-do labourers on the estate of his Royal Highness, or Lord Leicester, or any of those large estates.

5338. But those are rather exceptional estates, perhaps?—They may be. But my experience of these Lincolnshire men is, that they have to work hard themselves, and that they themselves and their families, their children, have to do everything with the land.

5339. But they are a thrifty and industrious class of the population?—Undoubtedly they are.

Chairman—continued.

5340. Are their holdings well cultivated?—Very fairly so; but not much better than those of the adjoining tenants.

5341. But they are quite as well cultivated as those of the large tenants?—Yes, in their way. Of course, there would be certain things that would not be so well cultivated. I may say that everything depends on the land. Take the question of drainage or ditches or things of that kind; these small farms we find, as a rule, go rather bad in that respect. That is a drawback with them.

5342. You are in favour, as I understand, of the multiplication, as far as possible, of small holdings?—Certainly I am.

5343. Why?—I have already said that my opinion is that there should be farms of all sorts and grades. That is well known to be my opinion; but it does not find favour with either owner or tenant in my own county, I am sorry to say. Some 10 or 12 years ago I had a conversation with a nobleman in our own county who was a very just and able man of business, who asked me if I had any trouble in letting big farms. His opinion was decidedly in favour of big farms, and my own was against it, from the fact that although the tenant may be surrounded by his family, and in a prosperous and good position, death comes, and I could not for the life of me say who was to succeed him as tenant. That was my reason for it. I then suggested to the nobleman that if there had been small occupations, that is to say, farms from 1,000 acres to 100 or 150 acres on the estate, the sons of these big tenants in their fathers' lifetime would have been preparing to be their successors. That is why I came to give evidence in favour of small holdings here; that proves that I am in favour of them.

5344. I think you said that in your opinion there should be farms of all sizes?—Yes.

5345. And I think you have said also that in Norfolk the feeling is against this?—Yes.

5346. May not that be due in part to the character of the land and the nature of the cultivation?—Yes, because the bulk of the land in Norfolk is very light land; there is very little pasture land indeed.

5347. In acquiring small holdings it is very important, is it not, to have regard to the quality of the land?—Yes. If you are going to have more holdings they must not be the poorest of the land, but they must be slightly more than the average, and they must be situated near the homes. Then the largest tenants, by that means, would not quite like that.

5348. What you mean by that, I suppose, is that the large tenant fears that he may be deprived of the pick of his land?—Yes.

5349. But still the question of success or failure of small holdings depends upon the land being suitable for that particular purpose?—Exactly.

5350. And it might well be that the land in Norfolk was not suitable for small holdings, but

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Chairman—continued.

that the land would be suitable in other counties?—Yes; and I am strongly in favour of that.

5351. I mean, therefore, that the disfavour in which the system is held in Norfolk is no argument against the extension of the system in other counties?—No.

5352. In your opinion, are greater facilities required than exist at present for the creation of small holdings?—Would you mind explaining that a little more?

5353. What I mean is this: at the present time is there a demand for small holdings?—Not in Norfolk. In the other counties that I have mentioned there certainly is.

5354. Do you think that that demand is fully supplied?—Very nearly in Lincolnshire. There are always applications for any little bit of land that falls in; and of course a man who has got a small holding naturally craves for the piece adjoining him.

5355. And if greater facilities for acquiring these small holdings were offered, do you think that they would be taken advantage of by the labourers and others who are not at present tenants, but would like to become so?—They would be very glad to do so; but I do not quite see how it is to be managed yet.

5356. But if it can be managed, you would think that it would be an advantage?—Yes.

5357. Do you find that a man who has a small holding is steadied by his occupation of the land?—Decidedly.

5358. What quantity of land do you think that a man who has got any other occupation can cultivate with advantage?—I think that 25 acres is the quantity that I would recommend.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5359. Is that in Norfolk?—That would apply to them all.

Chairman.

5360. That is where the man has no other occupation?—Yes. I mean anything, say from a field of eight or ten acres, up to 25 acres. But there can be no hard-and-fast line laid down as to what kind of application of the land you would adopt.

5361. But if he has to live on the land without any other occupation, he must have 25 acres at the least?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5362. Would that be with regard to the light land?—In my particular district in Norfolk, from the Point of Lynn across Holkham way, we have very large farms, from 600 to 800 and 1,000 acre farms.

Chairman.

5363. What capital do you think that a man would require for a holding of this kind; of 25 acres?—He would require a capital of 250 *l.*

5364. That is 10 *l.* an acre?—Yes. I reckon it in this way. He would require a mare, a pony and cart, two cows, pigs, poultry, hay, roots, and his own labour; therefore he could not do it for less than 250 *l.*

5365. That is without the buildings?—Yes, that is what the tenant ought to be in command of himself really. I am dealing with the tenant, not with the landlord.

Chairman—continued.

5366. Do you think that the tenants are, as a rule, able to find the necessary capital?—Certainly not, neither those of the large farms nor those of the smaller ones, I am sorry to say now.

5367. But in your experience, which class of farmers has best got over the agricultural depression; the small farmers or the large farmers?—Some of our best large ones in Norfolk have; but that does not apply to Lincolnshire.

5368. I am afraid that your experience in Norfolk is very exceptional?—Will you leave me out from Norfolk then.

5369. Yes, I think so?—My best men there are men who, as young men, got the weight put upon their shoulders very early in life, and have had to work up with it; therefore those men who have the capital have been able to stand the depression, and have done the best with their occupation.

5370. Then, dealing with the other counties of which you have knowledge, and where there are small holdings, would you say that the smaller farmers or the larger farmers have done the best in these bad times?—My impression is that the middle-size man has done about the best; I mean the man with about 100 to 150 acres That is my impression about them.

5371. Do you find that there are any difficulties in the way of men acquiring small holdings in these counties?—The stumbling block is the capital first.

5372. That is the first difficulty?—That is the one difficulty.

5373. Is there any difficulty in getting on the land; supposing that the capital were forthcoming, is there a sufficient supply of small holdings to meet the demand for them?—In Lincolnshire, certainly, I should have to make more holdings; I certainly must. Every bit of land is taken up as quick as they can get it by these small men. I may say that in Lincolnshire I have nothing in arrears now. I have 300 acres of land in hand now. Rentals range from 20 *l.* to 500 *l.* a year; those are my sized tenants there.

5374. And when a big farm comes into your hands are you accustomed to divide it now into small holdings?—If I could find a respectable successor I should not do that.

5375. You would let it as it stands?—Yes, unless perhaps the tail end of it would be fitting into another man's farm, which would give the opportunity of letting him have it.

5376. Why would you do that; in the first place, let me ask you this; could you not get a higher rent for the small holdings?—Yes; but, supposing that I have a man paying 500 *l.* for 300 acres, I do not think I should be wise in regard to my employer in dealing too much with that in the way of subdivision. I do not think honestly it would be right.

5377. Why not?—It would throw difficulty in my way; it would be 33 *s.* an acre; of course in Lincolnshire, as a rule, they are all domiciled in the villages, and their lands are all at a considerable distance, and everything is brought home.

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Chairman—continued.

home. That would entail a certain amount of building and sheds, and other things of that kind.

5378. That is what I wanted to bring you to. The reason why it would not be right for you, in the interest of the landowner, to divide a property of 300 acres would be that he would have to find the capital for putting the buildings on the land?—Certainly.

5379. And could he not borrow the capital from land improvement societies?—Yes.

5380. Would not that pay him?—In some cases it would, of course; but I have not gone by that. My own system, and the advice I have given to my employers, has always been not to go to any of these societies, but to work by time and their own capital. But you can borrow money, I think, at 26 years to pay it off.

5381. Have you considered whether labourers or others who have come upon the land would be able to succeed better as owners or as tenants?—My own impression is that they would succeed best as tenants in the long run; but they would work harder in their own interest if they were owners themselves. I know what it is in our large holdings, that the man who is farming his own land is far worse off than the man who is a tenant and pays rent.

5382. Which would they prefer?—They might prefer to become owners; but my opinion is not in favour of their becoming owners in fee.

5383. You would prefer that they should be tenants rather than owners?—Yes.

5384. Because you think that they would succeed better?—In the long run. I think honestly that they would.

5385. Will you explain that answer, because you tell us that, if they were owners, they would have the stimulus of ownership, and would be likely to work better?—Yes.

5386. Then why do you think they would not succeed so well?—I mean to say that my impression of it is that, with the few owners there are it is nearly all borrowed money on their places now.

5387. You think that the difficulty would be the borrowed money?—Yes; they would be so heavily charged in the shape of rent and in the shape of borrowed money upon it.

5388. I do not know whether you were in the room when the last witness was being examined?—I was part of the time.

5389. I do not know whether you heard the question which I put to him on this very point. I asked him why a man who borrowed money and had to pay interest would be worse off than a man who had to pay rent. For instance, supposing a man pays, we will say, 70 *l.* for an acre of land, if he borrowed the whole of that, the interest at 4 per cent. upon it would be 2 *l.* 8 *s.*?—Yes.

5390. But the witness told us that in his district, where they were paying 70 *l.* an acre for the land, the rent was 2 *l.* 10 *s.* or 3 *l.*, so that the rent was more than the interest on the money would be, and I suppose it would be the same everywhere. What I want to know is why should the owner be worse off than the tenant?—I speak simply from the position in which I find all those men who are owners of the smaller occupations, unfortunately; I find that they are worse off than the tenants.

5391. You speak from practical experience?—Yes, from my own experience of them.

5392. But you do not quite know how it happens that they are so?—I cannot tell how it is, but I know it as a fact.

5393. Now, supposing that there were land offered for the purpose of small holdings, do you think that the villagers and others who are able to cultivate it would be likely to save or to obtain capital to erect a set of buildings?—They would put buildings up in their own way, and of course, they would put them up in a very rough, crude style

5394. But would they be good enough for the purpose?—They would simply be shelter hovels, and if you were to go there after a few years, you would see these places in a very depreciated state; and there would be no uniformity.

5395. They would not be as good as the cottages on the Sandringham estate?—You corrected me there once. I had the honour of seeing you there once and I hope I shall again.

5396. What do you think would be the effect of offering the rural population assistance to obtain small holdings of land, say to the extent of three-fourths of the purchase money?—I think you would have a great number of applicants.

5397. Do you think that it would be safe?—That is the only difficulty about it; that is the discriminating point; that is what I am rather afraid of.

5398. You would have to be very careful, you think, as to whom you chose?—Yes. Taking even the county of Norfolk I know that I can put my hand, when I have to pay my wages, on half-a-dozen men who would be only too thankful and would jump at it.

5399. You think that they would do well?—Yes, very likely.

5400. Then it would be a very good thing, would it not, to take those men and reward them for their thrifty habits by placing them in the position of small holders?—In some cases I should be very glad to be a party to it.

5401. Do you think that small holders have any difficulty in connection with cultivation, ploughing, and general cultivation?—In a village where half-a-score people took small holdings they would have to co-operate among themselves or hire the horses; they must hire from the neighbours and work one among another.

5402. If a man obtained part of his livelihood from the land, would he have any difficulty in finding any other occupation?—He would require to have a trade of his own to go with it. During certain times of the year he could find work with the farmers.

5403. Could he occupy a small holding, and at the same time increase his income by working for farmers?—Taking the harvest months, and taking the haysel months, or the turnip months, he might; but during some seven or eight months he would have a difficulty in finding labour from the farmers.

5404. Do you think that farmers favour such

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Chairman—continued.

an arrangement?—I do not think they do mostly.

5405. I suppose they think that they cannot count upon the labourers so completely as they do at present when they have nothing else?—Certainly not.

5406. Is the rate of assessment higher for the small holdings than it is for ordinary farms?—It would be. The rent would be a trifle higher.

5407. Because the land would be better land?—Yes, it would be on account of that. And then there would be a shilling or two per acre more. But I have said in one of my notes that it would be very bad policy indeed for a landlord to add two guineas an acre for land when his tenant was paying him 30 *s.* for the land immediately adjoining.

5408. You mean that you would be in favour of his letting his land at the average price?—Yes, it may be two or three shillings more.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5409. I understand you to say that 25 acres of land is about sufficient for a man to live upon?—That is what I put it down at.

5410. What quality of land would that be?—It would be land rented at 30 *s.* an acre, that is to say, land capable of producing from about 3½ to 4 quarters of wheat to the acre.

5411. That would be better than the average of your Norfolk land?—Yes.

5412. It would be more like your Lincolnshire land?—The Lincolnshire land would do that.

5413. What part of Lincolnshire were you referring to?—I am referring to a place called Swayton, about seven or eight miles from Sleaford, in the Spalding district.

5414. You say that to cultivate that amount of land a man would require 250 *l.*, that is 10*l.* to the acre?—Yes.

5415. Do you think that the large holders have a capital of 10 *l.* to the acre?—I am sorry to say that they have not. I may tell you that I began business myself, and I do not mind telling you that I did not have 7 *l.* to the acre myself, and my first crop made 17 *l.* 10*s.* to the acre. So I have seen some changes.

5416. Have you any idea what the produce of these small farms is, that is to say, what is the value per acre?—We go by what we call coombs in Norfolk, that is half a quarter; and at the present moment the wheat crop comes to 5 *l.* 10 *s.* per acre.

5417. I am not speaking of wheat particularly, but what would be the average for the whole farm?—We want to get up to 6 *l.* an acre as the whole surrounding.

5418. You do not know why a man who occupies his own land should not do as well as a tenant?—Unfortunately they have been burdened, as I tell you, with their charges; I do not know the reason why; but, as a rule, we do not see them.

5419. Is it not because they are not the owners of their own land, if I may put it so, that they have to pay in the shape of mortgage a higher rate of interest than they can afford to pay?—There is no doubt about it.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

5420. I think you told the Chairman that in your opinion there was a feeling against small holdings in Norfolk?—Yes, I did.

5421. Now I want to ask you whether that feeling is not entirely confined to the larger class of tenant farmers?—Yes, it is.

5422. But that as regards the landowners, and as regards those men who would be likely to require small holdings, the movement is a popular one?—That would be, as I told the Right honourable Chairman, in the neighbourhood of towns, or where there is a market for the commodity that these men can produce; I have said that there is no hard-and-fast line to be drawn. Mr. Bidwell gave you evidence here that the difficulty was principally in cultivation and tillage. I differ, because I think that the man must have his cart and mare, as it were, from which he breeds, his two cows, his pigs, and a little poultry; and therefore I think that a 25-acre holding, such as I have described, should have seven or eight acres of pasture, and the rest he will just farm as he likes.

5423. As a matter of fact, the larger villages and market towns in Norfolk are not supplied with small holdings, are they?—Certainly not.

5424. And there is a difficulty in obtaining them?—Yes.

5425. And if there were increased facilities afforded for obtaining small holdings it would be a popular movement?—Near the large towns certainly.

5426. And, to put it in a rough-and-ready way, if any county Member for Norfolk were to vote against a proposal of that sort in the House of Commons he would hear of it?—I think he would.

5427. Your experience proves that the rents on small holdings are paid very regularly, does it not?—Yes, in Lincolnshire, certainly; and where I am working now in Leicestershire I heard the same argument; they are all paid.

5428. Even in Norfolk, if you had, say a 300-acre farm thrown on your hands, and you were unable to let it, would not you be disposed to try and cut it up into small holdings, provided it were near a large village or market town?—Yes, your finishing remark applies to that; it must entirely depend on the locality.

5429. And you have no doubt in your own mind as to the advantages that would be gained by men being able to employ their spare time on small holdings if they have the means to obtain them and the power to cultivate them?—I should not object to that in the least; I commend it.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5430. In your evidence before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, you said that you were very anxious to see farms of all sizes?—Yes.

5431. And you mentioned three acres and four acres as among the sizes of farms you would like to see?—Yes.

5432. And specially farms which represented (as the question put to you stated) the old yeoman class of about 30 or 40 acres?—That is quite right.

5433. You

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5433. You would like to see those restored?—Yes.

5434. And you say that, in your parish, you know about half-a-dozen men of the labouring class who would be able to farm that?—They would be only too anxious to obtain it, and could farm it, but they must have some help.

5435. Out of about how many would that half-dozen be?—I could pick them out of some 100 or 120 labourers; but they are men who have just got that little start; they have just got their own horse and they want a trifle more.

5436. Is it your opinion that these men could become owners of land or cultivating tenants?—I should say cultivating tenants.

5437. Without some help?—They must have some further help.

5438. Then you would be in favour of doing that by means of the county authority or some such means. Supposing it to be safe to the ratepayers, you would have no objection to helping such men in that way?—No, not beyond a certain number.

5439. Supposing that there were a method of ownership which should be free from this mortgage and the many incumbrances which you speak of, would you then say that cultivating ownerships would not offer greater advantages to the holder than tenancies?—I have expressed myself already very strongly with regard to the difficulty that there is about it at the present moment. I can quite understand your wish and desire, and the natural ambition of any man to arrive at the point.

5440. You admit that there is a natural ambition?—Yes, I do; but still I have said that I do not look upon the man as equal to a real tenant.

5441. Is there any means of securing to a tenant compensation for his improvements and what he might put on the land; is there any means of securing to him the results of those improvements in any other way than in some form of ownership?—You mean almost approaching the tenant-right system.

5442. No; first of all I ask you, is not the tenant liable to lose some of his improvements in case he should leave his tenancy?—He might lose some; he might lose a certain portion; but I think that is dying out. I think that what a man has done himself is a real proof of that.

5443. But you admit that in the case of an owner he would be absolutely secured?—Yes.

5444. And that so far, there would be an inducement for a man to use extra effort, and to put more on the land?—Yes.

5445. You were speaking about the necessity of having good land for small holdings; is it your experience that small cultivation invariably improves land?—No; I merely give that view. I have two noblemen whom I know personally well; one of whom has made different farms into large farms, putting three and four together, and the other, after the Crimean War, when I was making 17 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre for my wheat, halved his occupation, and that halving proved fatal.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5446. What was the size of the occupation when he halved it?—Between 500 and 1,000 acres; that was a great sheep-feeding farm. I may tell you that if you put land before a labourer which would not be worth more than 10 *s.* or 12 *s.* an acre, it is not a boon to the man. I think that the land for small holdings ought to be of the value of 30 *s.* an acre.

5447. You spoke of the big men having weathered the storm of agricultural depression better than the small men; is that your experience?—My experience in my own county of Norfolk is that the men who really have stood the depression have been the extra large men.

5448. I have only one more question to ask you. We are importing in the small articles of food about from 26,000,000 *l.* to 30,000,000 *l.* sterling per annum; could you suggest any alteration in the system of our present tenure which would enable us to supply that amount of food by growing it instead of being dependent on foreign sources?—Would you mention just a few of the things you mean?

5449. Yes. There are cheese, butter, poultry, bacon, hams, fresh pork, salt pork, potatoes, onions, and vegetables?—With regard to all those things the nearer they are to large towns the more valuable they are, and you can get a return for them. But if a man lives ten or a dozen miles from a town and is an occupier, he must turn his attention to the bringing up of stock. He could not go in for that cultivation; the expenses would beat him.

5450. Can you suggest any alteration in the tenure of land other than the creation of small holdings (I put it in that way) which would enable us to produce those articles which England is pre-eminently fitted to produce, instead of our being year after year dependent for our supply on foreign countries?—I do not know of anything, only in the breeding and rearing of more of our own stock; that is all I can think of.

5451. But breeding-stock would not supply eggs and poultry?—No, but I cannot suggest anything as to that.

5452. Do you think that a large increase in the number of cultivating ownerships or holders would tend in the direction of supplying more largely these small articles of food?—Yes, I think it would.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

5453. You expressed an opinion just now against small holdings on bad land; is not the distance from the market or a large town to a certain extent a factor in the question?—Of course it is.

5454. A small holding on bad land near a good market or a large town might succeed?—It might succeed a little by the labour and manure.

5455. So that really the distance from a market or a large town is an element in the question?—Yes.

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Wednesday, 19th June 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JOHN THEODORE DODD, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

5456. YOU are a Barrister, I think?—Yes.

5457. And you are an M.A. of Oxford, and Standing Counsel to the Allotments and Small Holdings Association of Birmingham?—Yes.

5458. I think you have paid special attention to the subject which has been referred to this Committee?—Yes.

5459. And you have written pamphlets and other papers upon it?—Yes, upon allotments.

5460. Speaking generally, with regard to small holdings, I think you are in favour of facilities being given for their creation?—Yes.

5461. Will you state the grounds on which you urge that such facilities should be given?—I consider that facilities should be given for the creation of small holdings for the sake of the agricultural labourers, to give them better subsistence, and some prospects in life, and the means of keeping off the parish; to prevent the further overcrowding of the metropolis, and the lowering of wages in the metropolis; to prevent land going out of cultivation: to keep up the physical vigour of the people; to encourage thrift; to give the labourers some enjoyment, and to keep them out of the public-house; and I consider the question as important for London as for the country.

5462. Have you considered the best means of creating this desirable class of the population?—Yes. I am of opinion that the best plan of creating them is for the local authority to acquire lands, and to let them.

5463. In other words, by an extension of the Allotments Act, to holdings of a larger area?—I do not think that the Allotments Act is satisfactory; it would require so much extension and improvement that practically a new Act would be required.

5464. I was not referring to details; but the principle of the Allotments Act is that the local authorities are authorised to acquire lands compulsorily for the purpose of letting them in allotments, and as I understand your view is that power should be given, either by an extension of that Act, or by a new Act extending to larger holdings?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

5465. Up to what size of holding would you extend that principle?—I think up to 50 acres; that would be a very convenient size.

5466. As I understand, you prefer a system of tenancy for small holdings rather than a system of ownership?—I prefer a system of tenancy with very large powers. I would give the tenant full compensation for improvement; free sale, and so forth; but I would make them a tenant with very wide powers, rather than an owner with cramped powers.

5467. What do you call cramped powers?—I take, as the alternative scheme, Mr. Jesse Collings' Small Holdings Bill, which I had the pleasure of assisting to draw.

5468. What is the objection, in your opinion, to the proposals in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—I think it would rather fret the so-called owner to find that he was not the real owner; he would be called the owner, yet part of the money, three-fourths, is always to be unpaid.

5469. With regard to that, how is he more cramped by having to pay the interest upon three-fourths of the value of the holding, than he would be if he were a tenant, and had practically to pay interest on the whole?—Because in the one case he knows that he is a tenant, and will find himself, as a tenant, rather better off than his neighbouring tenants for the freedom he has; and, on the other hand, under this Bill he will think himself the owner, and find himself cramped in all sorts of ways that other owners are not; and it seems to me that would lead to a considerable amount of friction.

5470. That is rather a sentimental objection than a practical one?—I think in these things it is a practical objection as well, because the feelings of the people are important.

5471. But your objection, I mean, would be removed, if the man, instead of thinking himself an owner from the first, thought himself a tenant having to pay a quit-rent on three-fourths of the value of his holding?—To a great extent, it would. At the same time, I quite agree that, if he is to be the owner at all, a large portion of the money, at least three-fourths, should be left unpaid; because I think that if the community is

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Chairman—continued.

is to have the expense of creating the system, it ought to have a share of the profit, if the scheme turns out advantageous.

5472. Have you any other objections to Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal?—Another restriction is that the land is to be used for agricultural purposes only, and to be subject to the right of re-purchase by the community. I think that that restriction is quite right; but it takes away from the idea of ownership, and is again likely to lead to contention. Then, again, a devise to one person only is allowed; the effect of this would be that a "small owner" could not leave his holding to his widow for life, with remainder to his eldest son, or second son, or whoever he likes; and that, again, would make him feel himself to be in an invidious position, when he saw that other people could make devises of that sort. At the same time, I am quite opposed to the very wide power of settlement that we have now. I am not at all opposed to Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill; but of the two schemes I think the other is preferable.

5473. I want to find out from you what advantages the proposal to let the land would have over the proposal to make the tenant the *quasi* owner. As I understand, one of your serious objections to Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal is that the necessary restrictions would cause friction?—That is so, exactly.

5474. Would your objection to that be removed if the holder were allowed, as he is under the Ashbourne Act, to become absolute owner after a certain number of years by the payment of interest and instalments?—No; because then the community would lose the land.

5475. The community would lose the land, but would, of course, recover the whole of the money and interest which it had advanced?—That is to say, we should be taking a serious step with public money against the nationalisation of land, a step which I do not think advisable.

5476. Then your views are throughout, on this subject of the creation of small holdings, qualified by the opinion that some scheme of land nationalisation should be kept in view?—Some scheme of land nationalisation or municipalisation should be kept in view throughout.

5477. Therefore you would object to any scheme which made a number of persons absolute owners of small plots of land as likely to interfere with subsequent nationalisation or municipalisation of the land?—I think it would be an objection to spending public money over it; but I am not prepared to say that I should object to any amendment of the law which would facilitate the creation of small holdings in the ordinary way.

5478. Are there any other objections you wish to call attention to with regard to the proposals in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—Yes; it incorporates the Lands Clauses Act. I am of opinion that there ought to be a plan for compulsory purchase, but the Lands Clauses Act is too expensive; I would prefer the plan embodied in Mr. R. T. Reid's Housing of the Working Classes Bill [1888, No. 127; 1889, No. 134], or in Mr. H. P. Cobb's Allotments Bill [1887, No. 170]. It is most important that the public should obtain the land at a reasonable price, and that cannot be done, I believe, under the Lands Clauses Act.

Chairman—continued.

5479. Under your proposal, then, the local authority would simply take the place of the landlord?—There is one other point in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill; I do not like the phrase in the Compulsory Purchase Clause of the "willing vendor" and the "willing purchaser," because the vendor is not a willing vendor; it is making him that which he is not. I think the best plan would be to say that the price paid should be the fair value without any addition for compulsory purchase, and then to adopt the plan, either of Mr. Cobb, or Mr. Reid, which would greatly reduce the costs and expense; but I think that the landowner ought to have fair value for the land.

5480. Do you know the terms of purchase under the Artisans' Dwellings Act?—Under which of them; there are so many?

5481. Under the original Act?—I do not recollect them.

5482. Because that is, I think, if my memory serves me rightly, very much in the form that you desire; namely, that there is to be a fair value paid without any addition for compulsory purchase, and there are other provisions for preventing over value and deductions in the case of property being dilapidated; I need not deal with them now. What I was going to put to you was, whether you are acquainted with the valuations which have been made under that Act?—I have seen, in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, some statements about the enormous amounts that have been paid under some of the Acts, but I could not say from memory exact what they were.

5483. Perhaps you are aware, or you will take it from me generally, that under some of the schemes under that Act (the Birmingham one, for instance) the price paid for the property was reasonably considered to be very largely in excess of the fair value under the system of arbitration which was arranged by that Act?—Yes.

5484. Then the object, I presume, of Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal is to secure that a fair value, and not an excessive value should be paid?—I cordially agree with the object, but I do not like the wording.

5485. Would not the arbitrator under those words be forced to give only the fair market value, that is to say the market value when the seller is willing to sell, and the purchaser is willing to buy?—I think that either form of words would probably lead to the same result, but Mr. Collings' form is making the vendor willing when he is not.

5486. It is assuming that there is a willing vendor?—It is assuming that which is not, which I do not think is desirable. I do not think it makes any difference practically, and I think an enormous amount of the cost might be cut off by having simpler modes of valuation, and so forth, and a simpler process to that embodied in either of those Bills.

5487. It is rather an important question, is it not, in connection with any scheme, whether for the creation of tenancies or ownerships, that the local authorities should be enabled to buy the land at its fair value?—Certainly.

5488. At the same sort of price at which a

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Chairman—continued.

private purchaser would be willing to buy the land?—Yes. I think it is important in every way, as our municipal life is extending, that we ought to be able to get land for municipal purposes and public purposes at a fair price.

5489. I should like to ask you then, whether, in your experience, there has ever been a case yet in which a municipality has obtained land at the same price at which a private purchaser would have been willing to purchase?—I really do not know.

5490. I might ask you whether you are not aware that there have been many cases in which they have had to pay a great deal more?—My belief is that the price is very great; but that is only my belief. I will hand in what I wrote some time ago on that subject; or shall I read it?

5491. I want just to finish this part about the valuation. Would you hand in the proposals which you yourself support for a scheme of valuation?—I take those embodied in either Mr. Reid's or Mr. Cobb's Bill. I see this is what I wrote some time ago: "Extravagant compensation means high rents. It is proposed, under Mr. Reid's Bill, to give the landowners the fair value and no more. Under the present system it is usual to give avowedly 10 per cent. beyond the value, and, practically, often 50." Then I quote Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and other portions of the Report of the Royal Commission upon the Housing of the Working Classes.

5492. What I want to put to you is this; it is a matter of very great importance that the object of almost all the Acts, and the avowed object of the promoters of the Acts has been that a fair value should be paid and nothing more; that was the object of Lord Cross in the original Artisans' Dwellings Act, and it was so stated by him in the House of Commons; but yet under that Act, in spite of the intention of the promoter, enormous valuations have been given. Now I want to know whether you think the words in Mr. Reid's Bill are sufficient to prevent the same thing from happening again?—I do not think either the words of Mr. Reid or Mr. Jesse Collings' Bills are sufficient; but I think that the mode of cutting down the costs in Mr. Reid's Bill would secure it.

5493. Your hope is to reduce the cost of arbitration or valuation, but not reduce the amount given by the arbitrator?—Yes, it would do that. For one thing, I would have the income tax returns produced.

5494. That is in all cases where there is trade connected with the land to be taken?—Yes, in any case, in fact, where the promoters thought it desirable.

5494*. That would hardly apply to what we are discussing, the purchase of agricultural land?—Not often; but it might in the case of valuing a farm be important to know how much the farmer had made in the last three years.

5495. That would only be in the case of compensating the outgoing tenant?—Surely! Because the value to the landlord must to some extent depend upon what the tenant makes from it.

5496. I should have thought that the value to the landlord would have been reckoned chiefly by the rent he had been receiving for a long time past?—Yes; but tenants may sometimes pay rent out of capital. It would certainly detract from the value that many persons would be inclined to give if it was shown that the tenant made nothing for the last three years.

5497. Then you are in favour of giving to the local authority compulsory powers of purchase?—Yes.

5498. And how do you propose that the money should be obtained for the purchase of the land?—Might I first shortly state what Mr. Reid's Bill is on the subject of compulsory purchase?

5499. If you please?—He proposes to obtain the sanction of the Local Government Board, on a local inquiry, if the Local Government Board think fit; then the claim for one property, if under 1,000 *l.*, is to be decided by the County Court, and if over 1,000 *l.* by the High Court; all claims in respect of any one property are to be taken together; then, with regard to costs, the Bill would allow one skilled witness only, not separate sets of costs, and no costs exceeding 200 *l.*, or 5 per cent., whichever is the least.

5500. I was asking you about the process in the case of the local authority purchasing land with the object of letting it in small holdings; how is the local authority to obtain the money?—I think partly out of the rates and partly out of the Succession Duty, or some landlord's tax. I think that the Succession Duty should be increased to the same scale as the duty on personal estate.

5501. But assuming that that reform was accomplished, do you suggest that the Succession Duty would be the property of each local authority in its own district only; in that case there would be very great variations, would there not?—I do not know that it could be managed in that way; I suppose it would have to be by some arrangement under a Government grant.

5502. That would practically come back to this; that the money must be found by a Government grant?—Partly.

5503. Would you find any of it out of rates?—I think I should find some portion of it out of the rates.

5504. Would you find the greater portion of it out of the rates?—I think that the ratepayers should pay a portion.

5505. You would make them pay it out of income?—They would have to borrow the capital.

5506. And then the interest would be paid by the rates?—Partly, and partly by a Government grant.

5507. And the ratepayers would have the whole risk of the transaction?—They would have a portion of the risk.

5508. I mean this: that the risk of the capital is not great, provided it be guaranteed by the local authority; provided that the rates could be fallen back upon in the last resort, there would be no fear that the Government would lose anything of the money it had advanced; but, supposing that the rents are not paid, and that there is an annual deficiency, who is to meet it?—I think that part of the capital cost

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Chairman—continued.

cost of the scheme must be provided by a Government grant, as a gift from Government.

5509. You are aware that there has never been a gift made under any scheme; a loan has been made, but no gift?—Quite so; but part of the cost of this scheme ought to fall on the landowners in some way, and it seemed to me that the simplest way and the readiest was to take it out of the succession duty.

5510. But the normal working of a scheme of this kind would be, that the local authority would purchase the land, and if it purchased it at a fair value, it would have sufficient security for the money that it had spent, and if its rents were paid, and its tenants were industrious and thrifty men, there would be no loss at all?—That would be so.

5511. There has been, for instance, no loss practically under the land purchase Acts in Ireland; and, similarly under the Allotments Act in this country, it was not assumed that there would be any loss in the transaction. Therefore I put it to you that there would be no need for any gift at the outset; all that is wanted is a loan of the capital requisite to start this business, which ought to be, if well managed, a profitable business, ought it not?—It would be an immense advantage to the ratepayers, of course, that a portion of it should be a gift. I do not see why the ratepayers should pay for everything. I think that the landowners ought to pay more.

5512. But, in the first instance, they do not pay for anything; there is no loss in buying land necessarily, is there?—No.

5513. What is the gift to be for; is it your proposal that whenever a local authority expresses its willingness to buy land for this purpose, thereupon a free gift out of the taxpayers' money is to be made to that local authority?—No; my notion is this: that a portion of the succession duty, or some other landlord tax, should be given to the local authorities in general for certain beneficial works in their district. For instance, in London, I should use it for dwellings for the poor. I would, in fact, relieve the ratepayers of certain burdens, a relief which I think very desirable; and what the country wants is allotments and small holdings; what London wants is homes for the people, and various other things.

5514. But this gift would only be required in case there were a loss?—I think that any way it would be so much benefit to the district.

5515. But I must ask you solely to deal with the question of the provision of small holdings: do you anticipate that the provision of small holdings by the local authority will land it in any loss?—In some cases it might entail a loss by the local authority.

5516. Then if it should not?—If it did not, there would be so much advantage to them if they had so much out of the succession duty.

5517. Would you give them a gift whether there were a loss or not?—I would give relief to the rates, and a general benefit to the community out of the succession duty.

5518. But you would probably do that quite

Chairman—continued.

independently of the provision of holdings?—I would in London, where you could not have small holdings, certainly.

5519. Take the case of two conterminous parishes, one of which determines to establish small holdings, and the other does not find the necessity, or refuses to do so; if according to your proposal the succession duty were divided between the two in proportion to their population or rateable value, they would both have the advantage quite independently of the question whether there was a loss upon the small holdings?—Yes, it would reduce the rates, or give some other benefit to the people.

5520. That, then, is a proposal, I think, which is independent of the subject of our inquiry; it is not conditional upon the provision of small holdings?—You could have small holdings without it, certainly.

5521. And whether the State transferred to the local authority or not any proportion of any particular tax, you would make the loss, if there were any, fall upon the ratepayers in the first instance, whether they were recouped or not?—If there is a loss it must fall upon somebody.

5522. Clearly?—I do not see who it is to fall upon, if there is nothing from the Government, except the ratepayers. It is not my wish that it should fall on the ratepayers.

5523. But you would not make it fall on the Government; you would not say that the Government should be responsible for the failure of the scheme in some country district if it had nothing whatever to do?—No.

5524. Clearly the local authority, which is responsible for the original purchase and for the subsequent administration of the estate, must also be responsible for any deficiency?—Yes.

5525. Would you put any limit upon the power of the local authority to purchase land as to extent, or any conditions as to the quality and character of the land that was to be purchased, or would you leave it wholly to their discretion?—I should give general powers to local bodies to purchase land. I should go beyond the small holdings altogether, and give general powers to local bodies to purchase land, possibly after a Local Government inquiry.

5526. For any purpose?—For any municipal purpose.

5527. For any municipal purpose you say?—For any municipal or district purpose.

5528. But not as a matter of general speculation?—I think my best reply to that will be to read what I have in this Bill here; it is in Mr. R. T. Reid's Housing of the Working Classes Bill, in Clause 2; we speak of dwellings, lodgings, baths, and so forth, and open spaces, and then the Bill gives power "To acquire for the local authority any land within the said area, or within five miles thereof, which, in their judgment, ought to be acquired with a view to the expansion of the said population." I would give a general power to them to acquire land for the benefit of the population, subject to some Local Government sanction.

5529. But in Mr. Reid's Bill, what he has in view evidently is the provision of dwellings?—For London.

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Chairman—continued.

5530. Do you go beyond that and suggest that the local authority should, purely as a speculation, have the right, compulsorily, to acquire any land in its neighbourhood, to become a landlord, and to fulfil the duties and obligations and duties of a landlord, and to take the profits, if there are any?—I do not see why they should not, with the Local Government sanction. That would prevent what I may call pure speculation.

5531. Not unless it were forbidden by statute; not unless directions were given to the Local Government Board to refuse on that account?—I would give the Local Government Board power to refuse on that account.

5532. It is not your own suggestion, or intention, I mean, that the local authority should purchase land merely with a view to speculation?—No.

5533. They must have some definite object in view?—Certainly.

5534. Such as the provision of small holdings, or something of that kind?—Certainly, something for the benefit of the population.

5535. I think that you have something you wish to tell us about charity land in connection with the provision of small holdings?—Yes; I would suggest, with a view of encouraging small holdings, that the Charity Commissioners should be directed (*a.*) to include in all their schemes (both charitable and educational) power to the trustees to let country lands for such purpose. (They are bound, under Mr. Jesse Collings' Act, to include in their charitable trust schemes power to let allotments, but the Charity Commissioners contend that that duty does not apply to educational schemes. Whether their contention is right I am unable to say; I think it should be inquired into). (*b.*) To make the encouragement of small holdings a distinct object of some of their schemes. (*c.*) Not to sell agricultural land except in special circumstances. In the last 10 years the Charity Commissioners have sanctioned the sale of real property, which realised 2,382,942 *l.* and, since 1853, 6,715,550 *l.*

5536. You object to the sale of land by the Charity Trustees?—Except under special circumstances.

5537. Why do you object to that?—Because I think, for one thing, that small holdings and allotments are desirable objects; and I am also entirely averse to diminishing what may be called semi-public land. It is against the nationalisation or municipalisation of the land, to diminish what land is already semi-national.

5538. Land, you mean, which is in some sort under public control?—That is a better expression.

5539. Do you consider that land under these circumstances is well administered; is it your experience that the administration of land by public authorities is satisfactory?—With regard to the charity trustees, the Charity Commissioners in one of their older reports speak strongly against the management of that kind of property; but it appeared to me that mismanagement was rather a ground for removing the trustees than for selling the land. If a man's steward mismanages the family property he does not usually sell the land, because he has an inferior or bad steward, but he rather dismisses the steward.

Chairman—continued.

5540. I can understand that good management might be secured where the local authority had only a limited amount of land to deal with, and was on the spot with local knowledge; but do you not think that there is grave danger of maladministration through neglect, or ignorance, by any public authority dealing with large quantities of land and over the whole kingdom. The Charity Commissioners, for instance, are responsible for the control of landed property in all parts of the kingdom, and does not it appear to you almost impossible for them, or for any other public authority in a similar position, to secure the best management of the land?—They do not manage the land.

5541. They control the management?—It is their duty to control the trustees when they mismanage it; they do not interfere in the ordinary management of land; it is only when there is something wrong that they would interfere. And also they have to give sanctions to sales and so forth.

5542. I understand that the principle that actuates the Charity Commissioners in selling the land, is the difficulty of securing efficient control over the administration of the land by these trustees all over the country; that in order to do so it would be necessary for the Charity Commissioners to have a most elaborate and expensive system of inspection, and to keep up direct personal control over the actual trustees which they have found it impossible to do at present, and that sooner than attempt it, they have sold and have favoured the sale of the land. I put it to you that that is the principle on which they have acted, and I would ask you what answer you would make to that argument?—I think that that is probably the principle; but I should give them more control over the trustees, and provide better methods of electing the trustees, and give the local authorities a certain amount of supervision with regard to them.

5543. It seems to me that your views might lead to requiring the Charity Commissioners to part with the land to the local authority, and thereby sub-divide and localise the management in popular bodies; but that it would not be necessary to go so far as to prevent them from the sale of the land; it might be desirable still to secure some kind of public control and management, if——but it is impossible to obtain it in a centralised form in a body like the Charity Commissioners?—Yes; I do not want the Charity Commissioners to manage the land; I should improve the trustees and improve the methods whereby the trustees can be checked and brought to account.

5544. The same remark would apply, would it not, to any suggestion that the Government could themselves administer, control, or supervise the administration of land purchased for the purpose of small holdings; that could not be done by a central authority, could it?—I do not think so.

5545. It must be done by the local authority?—Yes, I think so; and, also, the trustees of charity

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Chairman—continued.

charity lands ought, I think, to be compelled to send in their accounts according to the statute.

5546. Your suggestion with regard to the Charity Commissioners may be summed up in these words, may it not, that it would be desirable that in all their schemes, and in their general administration, they should have more regard to the desirability of providing small holdings?—Yes; and they should not sell the land, except under special circumstances.

5547. Unless they sold it to the local authority for those purposes?—Yes. I ought to say that I do not recollect any mismanagement of land by the charity trustees within my own knowledge, except they often omit to let land in allotments, and to send in accounts.

5548. I think we have had a suggestion made to us that the Charity trustees should be required to transfer the land to the local authorities in the district in which it is situated, taking from them either in the shape of a sum down, or of annual instalments, the value of the land so transferred to them, leaving the local authority to deal with the land for the purpose of creating small holdings; what do you say to that?—At present I am rather doubtful; I have not thought it over. Also, I would empower the Charity Commissioners to invest money, in proper cases, in the purchase of land. The official trustees of charitable funds hold nearly fourteen millions of money, which, however, does not include certain other moneys or funds held by them. All the above figures as to the Charity Commissioners are taken from the 36th Report, page 11.

5549. Your proposals amount to a reversal of the whole policy which has governed the action of the Charity Commissioners and Parliament for a great many years?—Yes, because I would improve the management instead of selling the lands; also, I would empower the local authority to recover all lands and interests in land belonging to charities which have been lost or stolen; and they should have special powers of recovery given them; and when they recover land they should be empowered to use it for allotments and small holdings, paying the net rents to the charitable uses for which the property was given. In towns like powers should be given to utilise land for housing purposes. My object is this: There are certain small sums and interests in land which are lost, or being lost, and I think that if we gave the local authority the power to sue, and gave them additional powers, there would be a better chance of recovering these small losses.

5550. Your suggestions are very drastic and very wide, but I am afraid that in many cases they go beyond the scope of our particular inquiry. I want you to specially confine your suggestions to the means of promoting small holdings, which is the only point that we have to deal with at present?—Yes.

5551. Then I think that you have some similar suggestions to make with regard to Crown lands?—Yes. In some cases Crown lands might properly be let in small holdings. There ought to be relations between the Crown officials who have charge of Crown lands, and the district councils. And a schedule or list of Crown lands within each district should be forwarded to the district council. This list should include all lands in which the Crown has a reversionary interest; that is to say, where there is a perpetual entail under the 34 & 35 Henry 8, c. 20. It is stated by Messrs. Wolstenholme and Turner in their work on the Settled Land Act, second edition, page 74: "It is conceived that there are many cases in England where the fact that a perpetual entail exists under the Act of 34 & 35 Hen. 8, c. 20, has been altogether lost sight of." I think there is a great risk of the Crown losing these lands and the proceeds of the sale of them. This risk is increased by the Settled Land Act.

Chairman—continued.

5552. Pardon me; this again is a very valuable suggestion for recovering or maintaining the rights of the Crown, but I want to see its application to the provision of small holdings?—In this way; give the local authority power to recover this land for small holdings, and you give them the inducement to set to work to retain or recover it, and you thereby have on the spot some authority whose duty it is to see after the public property and to prevent losses. The note from Wolstenholme and Turner is not a lengthy one; it is a note to Section 58, Sub-section (1), Clause (iii) of the Settled Land Act: "This sub-section will have an important effect in Ireland, where there are large tracts in which the Crown has a reversion on a base fee. The tenant for life will now be able to sell free from this reversion, though a tenant in tail cannot do so," in England, "by the ordinary disentailing assurance. In almost every case the Crown's reversion in practice is lost sight of and disregarded, and the proceeds of sale will generally be paid to the first person who bars the entail, and thus the Crown's reversion will be altogether lost. It is conceived that there are many cases in England where the fact that a perpetual entail exists under the Act 34 & 35 Hen. 8, c. 20, has been altogether lost sight of." Then the note goes on further; perhaps I ought to read the whole note: "If the Crown grant be before that Act, a recovery before the Act barred the issue, but not the Crown's reversion (Neal *v.* Wilding, 1 Wilson, 275), and after the Fines and Recoveries Act the reversion also could be barred, and thus a complete title obtained. In many cases it may be difficult to ascertain whether the entail is subsisting or not." I believe there was some power in Ireland to bar entails before the Settled Land Act. Therefore I would submit that by giving the local authority some power with regard to Crown lands you not only benefit the local authority, but you also benefit the Crown or the public.

5553. In your practice have you come across any instances of the kind?—No, but I find in the case of *re* the Bolton estates, 52 Law Times Reports, new series, page 728, that money representing land in which the Crown has a reversion was paid out of court to trustees.

5554. Where does the reversion of the Crown come in in these cases?—I suppose it is at the death, and failure of issue.

5555. After the extinction of the line?—Yes, the extinction of the entail.

Mr. *Compton Lawrance.*

5556. On failure, I suppose; on failure of the issue of some person or persons?—Yes.

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Chairman.

5557. Then with regard to uncultivated lands, have you any suggestions to make?—Yes. I think that any person ought to have power to take uncultivated lands and cultivate them.

5558. How do you define uncultivated lands?—I define them as lands of a rateable value of less than 5 *s.* an acre; and I would exempt from the power of appropriation (*a*) burial grounds and ground annexed to any place of worship, school, &c. (*b*) All moors, mountains, commons, &c., to which the public have reasonable aceess. (*c*) All ground which the owner chooses to protect by voluntarily paying the rates on 5 *s.* an acre.

5559. Would you give the right of free squatting on all land that does not come under your three exemptions?—The process should be by order of the district council, and subject to appeal to the county court judge; it would not be free squatting. The price should be fair, without allowance for compulsory purchase, or else a rent-charge.

5560. Then that is not even an extension of your previous proposal; because if you have given a general power to take any quantity of land anywhere for these purposes at a fair price, that would include uncultivated land as well?—This is a simpler process.

5561. But you do not propose to take uncultivated lands for nothing?—No.

5562. I thought at first that your idea was that they were to be taken over by anybody who was willing to take them over without payment?—No, certainly not; but this is a much simpler process; there would be no outlay by the district council. The local authority simply makes the order. There is the uncultivated land, and the man who wants to go in and cultivate it; and I propose that he may go in and cultivate it.

5563. It would be only the district council, I understand, we may take it by your proposal; it would not be the man who wants to cultivate it, but the district council?—The man who wants to cultivate it could do so by obtaining an order from the district council.

5564. Then the district council would be the court?—Yes.

5565. Then if the man who wanted to purchase it, how would it be?—Either by a sum down, or by a rent-charge.

5566. At his choice?—Yes, at his choice, or at the choice of the court, I do not care which; probably in the opinion of the court.

5567. Supposing, for instance, that there is an inclosed moor in Scotland, which, therefore, does not come within your exception, would you allow any person to obtain an order from the district council to cultivate any portion in any part of that uncultivated moor?—Subject to an appeal to the county court judge certainly; and, of course, the owner of the moor, if he liked, could protect it by paying rates on the moor of 5 *s.* an acre. If a man wants land for cultivation for a subsistence, I do not see why the landowner should keep it for his grouse or deer.

5568. Have you considered what effect that would have upon grouse moors and deer forests?—It would be rather bad for them.

Chairman—continued.

5569. It would absolutely destroy them, would it not?—I do not know.

5570. Have you any practical acquaintance with the subject?—Not with Scotland.

5571. I mean, are you sportsman enough to be able to give me an answer?—No, I am not a sportsman; but I know the moors in Yorkshire, of course.

5572. I am not sportsman enough myself to know, and therefore I am asking for information; I was going to ask whether the presence of small cultivators dotted here and there on a deer forest would not absolutely destroy the whole forest for the purposes of sport?—I think the answer first of all would be that the owner could avoid it by giving access to the public. If he is selfish enough to keep the public off the moors entirely, I do not see why the public should protect them.

5573. Is it not also because the presence of the public in any number would be fatal to the presence of deer?—At certain times of the year, but not during the whole year; but that would come under "reasonable access."

5574. May I put it a step further? We are both, perhaps, proceeding upon hypotheses; but supposing that the presence of a few of these cultivators proved to destroy the value of the property, either as a deer forest or a grouse moor, would that, in your opinion, be a fatal objection to your proposal?—I can hardly answer a hypothetical question, I am afraid.

5575. I will not question you any further, then?—I would say, as to the suggestion, that the cultivator might take a little plot out of the middle of the moor; that neither the district council nor the county court judge would be likely to sanction that; they would say, "No; you must not go there; you may go here or here."

5576. But that would be leaving it wholly to the discretion, in the first instance, of the district council?—And the county court judge.

5577. Do you not think that there are some district councils, which, if popularly elected, might be very likely to grant authority without regard to a result of that kind?—They might.

5578. You would leave them that discretion?—Subject to the opinion of the county court judge.

5579. I mean that you would not make it a condition in any statutory provision, that injury of that kind should not be done to existing property?—I would not mind putting in some provision that as little injury should be done as could be managed. But, if the two interests clashed, of the man who wants to get his daily bread and the man who wants to keep half the county for deer, I should prefer to take the side of the man who wants to get his daily bread.

5580. Probably if you had to consider the question you would consider how many people got their daily bread out of one and the other?—Yes.

5581. If you found that more people got it out of a deer forest than are likely to get it out of this kind of cultivation, would that be an argument, in your opinion, in favour of deer forests?—I should doubt if it would. A deer forest produces very little food.

5582. Then

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Chairman—continued.

5582. Then you have something to tell us about compensation for improvements?—Yes. When I suggested that tenancy was better than cramped ownership, I should say that it is essential that the small holder should have full compensation for improvements if he is a tenant. Now the Agricultural Holdings Act only purports to give compensation for 23 improvements, 14 of them with the consent of the landlord; one, namely, drainage, with notice to the landlord; and eight improvements without either notice or consent. In my opinion, compensation should be given for all improvements which increase the selling value of the farm as a farm, and including good husbandry, or good cultivation.

5583. Would you govern the compensation in every case by that provision that it must increase the selling value of the farm?—I ought perhaps to have said which increase the letting value of the farm.

5584. You are aware, of course, that there are very many improvements made now by the landlords which do not in the least increase the letting value of the farm?—Yes, by the landlords.

5585. And by tenants also; take, for instance, the case of a good landlord who repairs the buildings and improves and increases the buildings of his tenants; he, in very many cases, gets no advantage for that when he comes to re-let the farm?—I should have thought that it increases the letting value to have the farm buildings in good condition instead of in bad condition.

5586. It may be that the farm buildings are in better condition than is absolutely necessary, and that the incoming tenant is not willing to pay for them; in a very small experience I know numbers of cases of that kind; I should have thought it was a matter of common notoriety that the improvements of that kind do not pay interest; and what I was going to put to you is, that under the conditions which you are suggesting it appears to me that in a very great number of cases the tenant would get less compensation than he does under the provisions of the present Act, because he would have to show that in every case he had increased the letting value of the farm when he went out?—Under the present Act he can only obtain from the landlord, as compensation, such sum as fairly represents the value of the improvement to the incoming tenant. I am speaking of improvements made by the tenant. What I would do is this: I would give him such sum as fairly represents the value of all the improvements to an incoming tenant. I say "as a farm," because supposing the tenant were to go and choose to build, say, a manufactory, that of course would not increase the letting value of the farm as a farm.

5587. Supposing that he put up a greenhouse; I remember hearing of an Irish tenant who had a greenhouse some time ago; that would not probably add to the letting value of the farm; it might be the taste of the outgoing tenant and not the taste of the incoming tenant?—I had better probably adhere to the phrase of this Act, "what fairly represents the value of the improvements to the incoming tenant."

5588. Does that apply to every class of compensation in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That applies to all.

Chairman—continued.

5589. To every class of compensation?—In the Agricultural Holdings Act, certainly.

5590. However, I think I understand your view; you do not wish that the landlord should be compelled to pay for improvements which do not add to the letting value of the farm?—I will keep to the phrase of the Act. My point is this: that instead of limiting the tenant's claim to compensation for 23 improvements specified, I would give him a right to compensation for all improvements, provided that they improve it as an agricultural holding; I would give it for all improvements, including good husbandry and cultivation. Then also the sitting tenant should be compensated. It is very curious that the sitting tenant is compensated under the Allotments Act of 1887, and is is not compensated under the Agricultural Holdings Act. Then also the tenant should not run the risk of losing his compensation by sudden determination of tenancy.

5591. Do you want to give him a fixed tenure?—No, I mean this: supposing, for instance, that he loses his tenancy by some forfeiture, then, under the Agricultural Holdings Act, it is not clear that he can claim for improvements.

5592. Forfeiture for non-payment of rent, do you mean?—I mean forfeiture for anything. Supposing the tenancy suddenly determines in some way, he cannot give the required notices, and therefore he cannot claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act at all. I do not suppose it was intended that he should lose his right to claim. But the improved method which I would suggest is to a great extent embodied in Mr. Channing's Bill which I have here, Mr. Channing's Agricultural Holdings Bill of 1887.

5593. Could you just state the provisions which you consider important?—To give the tenant compensation for excellence of husbandry, and for all improvements, and to give freedom of cultivation and disposal of crops. Of course I do not refer to the last clause of the Bill at all; that has nothing to do with the subject.

5594. Are there any other legislative proposals which you would make?—I would amend the Settled Land Act, so as to encourage small holdings by voluntary effort in the following ways: I would extend the leasing powers to 999 years and perpetuity, without the cost of application to the Court. At present an application would have to be made to the Court, which is very expensive. Such a lease would be like a sale subject to rent-charge. Then I would enable a tenant for life to grant leases with the option of purchase, allowing, say, three-fourths of the money to remain on mortgage. Then I would abolish restrictions as to the sale of the mansion house. The Settled Land Act was evidently drawn in view of large estates, and not of small holdings, because one of the provisions is, that the tenant for life may not sell his mansion house without the assent of the trustees of the settlement, or an order of the Court. That is reasonable enough when you are dealing with a big estate with a big mansion house; but it

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Chairman—continued.

seems very unreasonable when the "mansion house" may be nothing but a cottage, and the "settled estate" three or four acres of land. Yet the lawyers do not know whether a cottage of that kind where the family live is not a mansion house. Then there is another difficulty that occurs with regard to small holdings. Small holdings, when they are settled, are generally settled by will. Of course small holders do not make marriage settlements of land, but they do make settlements by will, leaving to the wife for life, and then to the child or children. I should provide that the executors of the will should, by virtue of their office, be "trustees of the settlement for the purposes of the Settled Land Act." At present it is often necessary to come to Court to appoint such trustees if a sale is wanted. Then I would extend the leasing powers of the clergy. Then I think that the making and carrying out of small holdings should be included in the improvements sanctioned for the expenditure of capital money under the Settled Land Act. Most of these suggestions are provided for by Mr. Ince's Land Tenure and Transfer Bill, 22nd January 1886 (No. 83).

5595. Have you considered the question of the alleged diminution of small holdings?—So far as I can remember, and I made a little inquiry, small holdings have diminished in number in the last 30 or 40 years. It seems clear that formerly (I am speaking of a long time past) the poor had land; this appears, for instance, by the 31 Eliz. c. 7, which speaks of a cottage and four acres; and also there is a curious canon of Archbishop Mepham, A.D. 1328, in Johnson's Ecclesiastical Law, vol. 2, page 346, and Lyndwood's Provinciale, at page 99, which, after forbidding servile work on Good Friday, adds: "Yet we do not hereby lay any law upon the poor, nor forbid the rich to yield the customary assistance to the poor in tilling their lands for charity's sake." This, I think, shows that even people who were too poor to own beasts of the plough still had some land.

5596. It is suggestive, but it is not proof, of course?—Yes; but I thought probably it was a point that had not been brought before you, as it is in the ecclesiastical law books.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5597. What is the reference in the Act of Elizabeth?—The 31st Elizabeth, chap. 7.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

5598. That is repealed?—Yes.

Chairman.

5599. That only shows the existence of small holdings at the time; it does not show how many they were, or what proportion they bore to the rest of the population; therefore there is no means of comparison?—I think it is more than that. Cottages were not to be built on waste without adding four acres of land, and it is said in Raymond's report that a cottage with less than four acres of land was against the Statute of

Chairman—continued.

Elizabeth. So that apparently such holdings were tolerably common, or ought to have been.

5600. Do you consider that inclosures have had any effect in diminishing the number of small holdings?—I should think they probably had, by taking away the pasture for cattle. There is considerable evidence to show that the decisions of the judges, especially in the time of Elizabeth, that "inhabitants" could not as such claim "a profit *a prendre in alieno soliv*," deprived inhabitants in many cases of what they had enjoyed as of right, openly and peaceably, from time immemorial. That would refer to the right of cutting furze, and so on. And one of my authorities would be Digby on Real Property, at pages 156 and 157, which shows this: That probably the inhabitants had these rights, and although they might be able to prove that they had them for hundreds of years, peaceably and openly, yet by the law as laid down in the time of Elizabeth they could not retain them as of right. Mr. Digby, at page 156, says: "In many places, as a fact, the inhabitants have enjoyed and exercised such *quasi* rights of pasturage. And there can be little doubt that the practice has descended from very early times, and was in fact a recognised right in the community inhabiting the district before the idea arose that the soil was the property of the lord." As the law stands now "inhabitants" cannot claim, although they may probably have had this "profit *a prendre*" of cutting furze (or whatever it is) for centuries. An individual may claim by prescription against the public; but the public cannot claim by prescription against a landowner.

5601. I think your general view is that wherever these inclosures have taken place, so far as they have deprived the inhabitants generally of rights of pasture, they have made small holdings more difficult?—It would probably be so; but of course the inclosures were before my time.

5602. And I suppose the same remark would apply to minor inclosures, that is to say, of inclosures by strips by the roadside, as well as to the larger inclosures of which you have been speaking?—Yes; and the remedy that I would suggest would be, first, that I would enable "inhabitants" to claim by long user against individuals just as individuals may against the public; then I would place all such rights under the care of the district council; and I would have a general inquiry into the legality of inclosures, and, where they are found illegal, make such arrangements as may be just, but allowing compensation for improvements, and protecting all *bonâ fide* purchasers for value, in money or money's worth. Then the Highway Act under which cattle are driven away from the roadside green strips, has done harm to the small holder with his cow. The common, but erroneous notion among landowners, that they have a right to inclose parts of the highway beyond the *via trita* so long as they leave 16 feet from the crown of the road, has done mischief. The remedy would be to place the roadsides under the district council, with power to them to decide as to allowing animals to pasture there, and under what conditions they should be allowed.

5603. First

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Mr. *Llewellyn.*

5603. First of all I will ask you a question upon what you have just stated to the Right honourable Chairman; that you would allow the local authorities to consider whether pasturing cattle should take place on the side of the road; do you think that that would be an advisable thing?—Yes, it would be convenient to the "small holder" with a cow or two.

5604. Would it be a convenient thing to the public driving at night to find animals by the side of the road?—The district council would probably not allow them to be there at night; they would have them taken up at night.

5605. In fact, you would alter the present Act of Parliament which places it in the power of the highway authority to take care of that; you would give that power to the district council?—I do not think the highway authority has power to allow animals by the roadside.

5606. The highway authority has not power to allow that, but it has the power to prevent it?—Yes; I would give the district council power to allow animals to pasture there. In many districts they would do no harm whatever in the daytime.

5607. Do you mean animals led or watched?—The cow might be there and the boy sitting beside it.

5608. But you would not allow the public to turn out cattle to feed at the roadside?—I would, with somebody with them. But that is a question for the district. Near a large town like Birmingham it would be an extremely bad thing; but in purely country districts it would do no harm at all.

5609. You were speaking, just now, of uncultivated land, and I think I understood you to say that where an owner did not care to pay the rateable value of 5 *s.* an acre on it you would allow any person to cultivate it?—Yes.

5610. What do you mean by "any person"?—I suppose any of Her Majesty's subjects.

5611. You did not mean the local authority?—No; of course the local authority would have power under the other provisions. I want to give, with regard to uncultivated land, a quick and ready means for a man who wants to go and cultivate it to go and do so.

5612. Then you would allow him to squat upon that land?—To settle there.

5613. And pay any rent to anyone?—Rent-charge or purchase-money.

5614. To whom?—To the owner; he would buy it or rent it.

5615. And he would be rated probably?—Yes.

5616. Supposing that a man found that the land was not worth cultivation, what would happen to it then?—I would allow the landowner to re-enter for a certain number of years in the same way as is now the case with regard to lands taken by railway companies and not used.

5617. Would you allow the local authority to enter upon such land, and sub-let it, or let it to a tenant?—I think I would, in the first place, allow any person to enter.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

5618. When you said that you would allow any person to enter upon it, would you allow the local authority to take that land?—Yes, the local authority might take it under general provisions.

5619. But supposing that the local authority were to expend some money, and it would probably have to do so in making roads to it, and so on, you would allow that?—Yes.

5620. Supposing that land failed, that the tenant failed, how would you provide against loss to the rates?—I do not think I have made myself quite clear to you. There are two separate schemes; one is for the local authority to purchase the land and let it to various tenants, when of course the landowner would be paid and have no more rights over the land; that is with regard to any kind of land. With regard to uncultivated land, I want a more summary method, so that A. B. who wants to cultivate it may simply go and cultivate it.

5621. I think I understand that. But with regard to this man, this subject of Her Majesty whom you would allow to squat, how would you propose that he should start his farm: with means of his own; or would you be inclined to lend him money through the local authority?—I should not be prepared to lend him money; that is not part of my plan.

5622. In your opinion it would be an unwise thing for the local authority to advance money for that purpose?—No, I do not say that; but I should not advise it at present. I would not say either in favour or against that point. I would leave it open; it is not part of my scheme.

5623. But you would not be in favour of the local authority advancing money for the purchase of stock, or starting the man to farm so?—No.

5624. You think that that would be too dangerous?—I think it would.

5625. I think you stated just now, very clearly too, that you were in favour of increasing the number of small holders, and also that you would give any facilities for enabling these small men to start, and that you think the local authority by taking the succession duty or otherwise, should pay the chief expenses, or any losses that might occur?—Partly by the succession duty and partly by the rates.

5626. That is solely so far as you speak, with the object of cultivating the land?—Yes.

5627. Would you go further and allow the local authority to grant money to others besides small holders, to shopkeepers and so on?—As I said before, in towns I would for artizans' dwellings and so forth.

5628. But in a village, supposing that two or three men wished to have 25 acres you would assist them. What I want to get at is this: You think it is the duty of the State to help these people by a gift, as you called it, of public money; but would you enlarge that, and give facilities to others besides small holders to benefit by a gift from the State?—If you refer to starting shops, I would not.

5629. Where would you draw the line?—I draw the line as to where I think the thing is really needed. I think that there is great need

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

in the country for small holdings and so forth, and in the towns for artizans' dwellings and so forth; and so I consider that the public should expend money on both of these things. But I see no necessity for the public to spend money in providing shops.

5630. Supposing there to be two people in a village, one of whom wishes to set up as a small holder, and the other in a shop, you would be in favour of obtaining money for the man who wishes to set up in a small farm, and you would not be in favour of obtaining money for the man who wishes to set up in a shop?—That is so.

5631. Then the man in the shop would have to pay for the other?—He would have to pay something towards it, and he probably gets a customer.

5632. He would be repaid by the small farmer dealing at his shop?—He would get some benefit; it would be an improvement to the village life all round.

5633. I quite agree with you there; but do you think it is fair for this man who is anxious to get on that he should pay for the advantage of the small holder?—He should pay something; but part would be out of the succession duty, and he would not have to pay that.

5634. Supposing there were in a village half-a-dozen men anxious to start, naturally perhaps there would be three times the number of men who do not wish to take land; do you imagine that these others, the majority, would care to pay, or run the risk of the rates being increased to benefit these half-dozen?—I think that probably if they objected to the scheme they would elect on the district council men who would oppose it.

5635. But the scheme does not rest with the local authority; it is proposed that the scheme should follow an Act of Parliament?—Empowering the local authority.

5636. Yes?—But I do not suggest that the local authority should be compelled to start small holdings if the local authority does not wish to.

5637. Then you think that the safeguard of the village against this expense would be that they would not elect men who would put the Act in force in that way?—I think that those who were opposed to the Act would naturally vote for men who were opposed to putting it in force.

5638. Surely naturally more people would be opposed to running the risk than would be in favour of it?—I do not think so. I think that in many districts there certainly would be a vote for it.

5639. You think that the shopkeepers who would have to provide the money would in every case be ready to incur the risk on behalf of the few who wished to start a farm?—Not in every case; but in many cases I think the majority would be in favour; and where the majority were not in favour, the Act need not be put in force.

5640. I think you ground most of your views with regard to the success of this scheme upon the idea that in every case the farms would be profitable. How would you deal with the case of the local authority having made a bad bargain and incurred bad debts?—Partly they would have the succession duty to fall back upon, and partly the ratepayers would have to suffer for the mistake they made, undoubtedly.

5641. Through their representatives at the local authority?—Yes.

5642. And you think it advisable in the case of the local authority having made a bad bargain that it should be paid for out of the succession duty?—I think that in every case the succession duty ought to help to pay for the scheme, that the cost ought not to fall altogether upon the ratepayers.

5643. You stated just now that in valuing land you would take as the chief guide the income tax returns?—I said that they would sometimes be useful.

5644. You would not rely on them always?—No; but they would be a useful element in many cases.

5645. In valuing land for purchase?—Yes, I think so.

5646. You would not rely upon that altogether?—No.

5647. Have you had any experience of cases of the costs of transfer of land in small holdings; have you had any experience of the purchasing by a local authority of small holdings?—No.

5648. Not under the Allotments Act?—No.

5649. What would you, in your opinion, consider to be a safe margin to put for the purchase of, say, 25 acres of land valued at 50 *l.* an acre?—A safe margin for what, may I ask?

5650. For the expenses of conveyance?—I do not know.

5651. Have you formed no opinion on that point?—No.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

5652. When I came into the room you were raising some difficulty as to the scheme placed before the Committee of one-fourth of the purchase-money being paid by the small holder, and the other three-fourths remaining as a perpetual rent-charge; I do not quite understand your objection?—My objection is that in consequence of that and other provisions in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, the owner will find that he is not really the owner like other people, and I think that the restrictions will be likely to fret him. On the other hand, I thoroughly think it is better to have these restrictions than to make him absolute owner; because, if the community is to run the risk, the community ought to have the benefit in a species of municipalisation or communisation of land. But the best plan, I think, is to have a tenancy with a very enlarged power to the tenant of obtaining compensation for improvements and so forth; and I venture to suggest that in the Bill both plans might find a place, so that the local authority should have its option either to give a restricted ownership or a liberal tenancy.

5653. Now I want to ask you whether you do not think that a man desiring to be a small farmer, and who had, say, 200 *l.* saved, would not be crippled by having to pay probably 150 *l.* to 200 *l.* as his fourth share of the purchase-money, and

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

and his success rendered uncertain?—In such a case I think it would.

5654. And it would be desirable, would it not, if it were possible, to have a scheme by which he could retain his capital for the purpose of using it upon his land?—In many cases it would certainly be preferable.

5655. Then do you not think that all you are aiming at could be obtained by a scheme that would contemplate the tenant paying a rent-charge, say for 30 or 40 years, and then at the end of that time having a perpetual quit-rent to pay, of 5 *s.* an acre, say?—No, because such a scheme would be opposed to any nationalization of the land.

5656. Not necessarily; because that 5 *s.* an acre paid to the municipal authority would admit all the rights to the municipalised land for public purposes; the power of resumption would still be with the local authority?—I do not think the plan would be as good as a tenancy such as I suggest.

5657. It would give him the feeling of ownership, which you say your scheme would not; he would look forward to being practically owner, with a very small rent-charge?—Yes.

5658. And he would look forward to being in the position of leaving his son or his successor in a much better position than himself as regards the rent-charge?—Yes; but it would practically make him the owner, and thereby the community would not be the owner.

5659. The community could always become the owner?—By paying for it.

5660. When it was necessary?—Yes; I do not think that power would be sufficient. One is hampered so much of course by the London question.

5661. I want you to separate the two things as far as possible; the question of small holdings and little farms for the country, and building houses for the poor?—Yes, but there is this difficulty: that we cannot very well have municipalisation of the land in London, and just the reverse process in the country; and the London conditions are such that I think municipalisation will be speedily necessary unless some other thoroughgoing reforms are effected.

Mr. Jesse Collings.

5662. What are the drawbacks to which you refer connected with what you term this cramped ownership, as compared with the tenancies?—I think that the man will say, "You have made me an owner, and I am not an owner; I am always to be in debt; I cannot leave the land as I like."

5663. Stop one moment, please. Why cannot he leave the land as he likes?—Because one of the provisions of the Bill is that he is only to devise it to one person, so that he cannot provide for his widow and child, by leaving the land to both.

5664. Can he do so in the case of a tenancy?—Not very conveniently.

5665. Which would be in the better position, with regard to his widow and child; a man who died in a tenancy in which he had laid out money, or a man in the position of this cramped owner-

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

ship, as you call it, where he would have the right to go into the open market to get the highest price for his holding; which would be in the better position, in that particular case, with regard to his widow and child?—I think that the restricted owner would be in the better position.

5666. So far as the widow and child are concerned in case of death you think that the cramped owner would be in the better position seeing that he has free sale?—I think that he would be better off; but at the same time I think he would probably feel worse off.

5667. As a matter of substantial return he would be better off. What other difficulty have you?—Then you have also this difficulty; you have one tenure of freehold land in the holdings under the Bill and you have quite a different tenure of land outside.

5668. I am confining myself to the position of the holder; we have got as far as the first contention; that in the case of his dying with regard to his family he would be better off with the free sale in the open market which he would have. What was the other drawback that you named?—That he would always be in debt.

5669. In what way would he always be in debt?—Because part of the purchase-money, three-fourths, is always to be unpaid.

5670. But in case of sale that would be a charge on the land; the debt is a debt of which he could always relieve himself in case of sale, and which would be an advantage to him, seeing that it is at a small interest as long as he continues a cultivating owner?—An advantage to whom?

5671. As long as he continues as the cultivating owner he has but a small interest to pay on the debt which can never be called in; and as soon as he ceases to be a cultivating owner, either by death or will, then he can recoup his debt by the sale of the holding, together with any increased value that that holding may have acquired through his efforts?—From his point of view of course the pleasantest thing would be to be able either to pay it off, or not, as he thought fit; but I agree with you that from a public point of view that would not do.

5672. Then in the case of a tenant's outlay of capital on his holding how would the security as a tenant be better than, or as good, as that of this cramped owner's outlay upon his holding?—The security will be better, clearly, I think, in the case of the restricted owner, because he will be paying so much actual money down, when he enters, which would be a strong earnest of his *bona fides.*

5673. Can you conceive of any Compensation Bill which would protect the tenant in an equal degree to that in which the cramped owner is protected with the right of free sale always in the open market?—I should give the tenant free sale too.

5674. Then do you go for fixity of tenure as well?—Security of tenure.

5675. What might you mean by security of tenure?—That he should not be evicted except for non-payment of rent or for some other breach of the condition of tenancy.

 5676. Then

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5676. Then it is a perpetual tenancy subject to a provision for the payment of rent?—Yes.

5677. Perpetual tenure and free sale?—Yes.

5678. And how would you propose to arrange with regard to rent?—That it should be a fair rent, to be revised at certain intervals.

5679. Then your alternative to this cramped ownership is what?—Fair rent, free sale, and security of tenure.

5680. And a fixed rent?—No, the rent would have to vary from time to time.

5681. Then in case this tenant improved his tenancy to a very considerable extent and made it worth a considerable letting value, would he not be liable to have that rent from time to time raised?—The rent of course must not be raised on his improvements.

5682. Can you conceive of any law that shall be just to the landlord as well as to the tenant, that will secure to the tenant all these improvements, including cultivation, so effectually as if the man were a cramped owner with a power of going to the open market to sell to the highest bidder, a scheme just to the landlord as well as to the tenant?—Of course it would not be very simple, but I do not see why it could not be managed.

5683. You would agree that all these conditions are effectually secured by the cramped ownership; that he has perpetual tenancy as long as he chooses to remain; that he has absolute security for the market value of all his improvements, and can sell in the open market if he determines?—There would be this exception: that supposing the value of the holding fell to below the three-fourths, then I suppose there would be a personal debt. Supposing, for instance, that the value of a small holding was 400 *l.*, originally, there would be 300 *l.* perpetually charged on that; and supposing that by some circumstance the holding fell in value to 250 *l.*, then the holder would not have the security.

5684. That means to say, that the letting value of the farm would be lessened?—Yes.

5685. And in such a case, supposing that he were a tenant and went out, would you oblige the landlord to pay him for improvements, although the letting value went down?—I think he would be entitled to compensation for improvements in such a case.

5686. Would not such a proceeding be a ruinous one for the landlord?—It would be disadvantageous of course; it is the same with every landlord now.

5687. Do you, as a practical question, ever suppose that the Legislature of this country would grant such a provision?—I am rather inclined to think that a portion of the Legislature would be more inclined for the tenancy than for this ownership.

5688. That is not my point. You were raising the question in a case which I grant, is not likely to happen, that the land should go down so much below the cost, that is, its letting value; do you think it possible that we should ever get legislation to throw upon the landlord the duty to make up to the tenant for improvements when the letting value had gone down?—He has to do so now. I mean this: supposing that you let a farm, and the letting value of the farm goes down, still the tenant when he goes out is entitled to compensation for certain improvements. This of course would be wider.

5689. We need not dwell on that. You would agree perhaps that the danger is very remote where the small holding would go down in value in the manner we were discussing?—I should hope so.

5690. As a rule small holdings go up in value in consequence of superior cultivation and personal care?—Judging from the Small Holding Settlement I went over the other day (Herringsgate, near Rickmansworth), certainly I think the value was considerable. But I would suggest that the practical method is to put both these plans in the Bill.

5691. You would agree to have any practical scheme by which the ratepayers, speaking generally, should be protected, or feeling that they are protected from loss?—I do not see how you can protect them absolutely from loss. You must take all reasonable precautions I quite agree.

5692. I suppose you would admit that under the case of tenancies the ratepayers are not protected from loss?—Not so well protected.

5693. But under this restricted ownership, as you term it, they are protected in all reasonable manner from loss?—They are certainly more protected.

5694. Turning to another point, are you aware that a similar tenure of restricted ownership exists in Holland and in Denmark?—You tell me so, but I cannot recollect to my own knowledge. I have a vague notion of something of the kind in Denmark.

5695. Are you aware that when Mr. Jenkins speaks, for instance, of 80 per cent. of land in Denmark being held by proprietors, he includes among those a very large number of this restricted ownership, the owners regarding themselves, and being regarded by the public, as absolute proprietors?—I do not know Mr. Jenkins' remarks; I read them many years ago; but there seemed to me to be tenancies in various stages ripening into ownership.

5696. You were speaking of the Charity Commissioners and the sale of land; would not the object you have in view be secured if the land was transferred to the county council; in other words, if the clause in the Allotments Act of 1887, which gives the district councils the power of taking over the land from the trustees, or buying land from the trustees, were made compulsory would not that meet your views?—I do not think I should advise that course at present, till we see how the county councils work.

5697. Then what would you recommend to meet this case, that I have in point, where the charity has an income of 20 *l.* a year from the land, but the trustees are offered such a sum as would bring in 35 *l.* instead of 20 *l.* per annum; what answer have you to give to the trustees, or the charity when they assert that it is their duty to get as large an income to the charity as possible, and that they can nearly double it by sale?—I could not tell without knowing the circumstances of the case; but if it is worth 35 *l.* a year to somebody else, why is it not to the charity, is what I should ask.

5698. I mention

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

5698. I mention a specific case?—But I should not absolutely prevent sale; I should merely provide that the Charity Commissioners should not authorise sale except in special cases. That might be one.

5699. I am prepared myself to state that they should not sell, but it is a difficult question to answer. I did not know whether you had any answer to give to that proposition. There is one question more. Do you know the Holding of the Roman Emphytusis?—I have heard of it, but I have forgotten the exact details.

5700. It corresponds with the restricted ownership of which you have been speaking; you are probably not aware that it is a very favourite holding on the Continent?—I think I have heard of it.

5701. You stated that you would give the tenant for life power to sell with three-fourths of the money to remain as a rent-charge?—Yes, that is under the Settled Land Act.

5702. What protection would you provide that that rent-charge in itself was not sold, and the actual cultivator be charged a rent over and above the rent-charge, and thereby the cultivator having to pay a very high rent?—This is simply an amendment of the Settled Land Act.

5703. But I am speaking of the creation of small holdings?—I simply want to facilitate the voluntary creation of small holdings as well as provide the larger schemes.

5704. But I am speaking of your suggestion as compared with that of restricted ownership. We had a case at Minster Lovel, for instance, where there is a rent-charge of 9 *l.*, but the actual cultivator has to pay something like 15 *l.* that is 6 *l.* over the rent-charge. Do not you think it is important that the possibility of that, in the interests of the small cultivator, should be prevented?—I do not think it matters; as long as the cultivator has to pay a rent it does not matter whether a part of it goes to one person or to another.

5705. But in the case of restricted ownership of which you speak, the cultivator could never have a rent-charge of 9 *l.* 10 *s.* raised on him?—No, the case is quite different; the restricted ownership in your Bill would be absolutely different from the Settled Land Act; the only likeness is that there happens to be "three-fourths" in each.

5706. Which do you think would be better; the securing to the restricted owner of a low rent, or the possibility of his having that rent-charge and something else put on it?—I should think, generally speaking, the restricted owner in your Bill would be in a better position than the cultivating owner under the Settled Land Act who is under a private landlord.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5707. Did I rightly understand you to say in your answer to Mr. Jesse Collings, that what you propose is that the municipality having acquired the land is to let it to tenants on perpetual holding, fixity of tenure, and fair rent?—Yes.

5708. Who do you propose should put up the buildings?—I should empower the local authority if they thought fit; if not, they could let the tenant do it.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

5709. If the local authority do it how are to get the money?—Partly from the rates and partly from a Government grant in some form.

5710. Then fixity of tenure and fair rent, is not that property to all intents and purposes?—It is property certainly.

5711. How do you propose to arrange about fixing the rent in future; is it to be a variable rent or a fixed rent?—It would have to vary according to the decision of some land court.

5712. How would you disentangle the rent of the land from the value of improvement in the future?—You could only do that by evidence in the ordinary way.

5713. Would you propose to give the local authority any power to take the land again for public purposes when it is wanted?—Certainly.

5714. What is the local authority to whom you would entrust these powers?—I suppose the district council.

5715. That is to say the new district councils about to be created?—Yes.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

5716. Is there much uncultivated land which is actually cultivable so as to make it pay?—I should fancy a good deal.

5717. Have you made any inquiry into that?—I do not know. There is a good deal of land not strictly uncultivated, but land in a very low state of cultivation which would therefore come under the 5 *s.* rate in value.

5718. Do you think that there is much land on which you could create small holdings?—I think there is some.

5719. Do not you think that what land is uncultivated would be merely the edges of mountains or moors which could be cultivated by the adjoining farmers, not by a man setting up on his own account?—I think there is other land besides that.

5720. You would be hopeful that we may discover considerably more land that may be cultivated at a profit?—Certainly.

5721. Do you think that if Mr. Jesse Collings' Small Holdings Bill becomes law this Session, it would apply to much of the land of England and Wales within any appreciable time?—I think it might.

5722. Do you think that a considerable portion of the land of England and Wales would be municipalised?—I think that some would certainly; but of course more land would be if a cheaper method of compulsory purchase were provided.

5723. But you think it would take a considerable time, at any rate, before a large proportion of the land of England would become municipalised according to that Bill?—It would take some time.

5724. You are anxious in the meantime that the law of tenancies should be improved so as to secure security of tenure and fair compensation for improvements?—Yes. The same principle really, of course, applies to other tenancies besides those of which we are talking.

5725. And you would like to see embodied in this Bill some better provision for the present

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

present small holders with regard to security of tenure?—They could hardly come into a Bill of this character; but certainly I would suggest that the general law should be altered.

5726. Do you consider that the success of such a scheme as this very largely depends upon the amount of purchase money to be paid by the municipality?—To a considerable extent it must do so.

5727. Do not you think that that is one of the chief factors, if not the chief factor, in the success of that scheme?—Yes, it is.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

5728. Has the present state of the law had any effect in reducing the number of small holdings?—I think, as I said, inclosures have.

5729. Has the law of settlement done anything, and the law of entail?—It makes it probably less eligible to have it.

5730. You do not think that the laws of settlement and entail, the power of tying up estates, have had the effect of reducing the number of small holders?—It may to some extent.

5731. Primogeniture, has that had any?—I think so.

5732. Are you acquainted with any of the electoral rolls of counties showing the number of freeholders in former days compared with the number at the present time?—No.

5733. Have you no statistics of that kind?—No.

5734. I understand that in your view you are against small freeholders?—Not at all.

5735. I think I understood you to say that you wished for the nationalisation of the land, and to have a number of tenants, not small freeholders?—Yes, I would keep nationalisation thoroughly in view; but at the same time I would have all these lesser reforms which would enable people to buy if they liked. I would not delay altering the Settled Land Act and doing away with primogeniture, simply on the possibility of nationalisation. At the same time I would not spend large sums of public money in creating a system directly opposed to nationalisation.

5736. What you desire is then that the quantity of semi-public land, as you called it, should not be diminished?—Yes.

5737. But that there should be no power on the part of those small holders to purchase outright as freeholders portions of those semi-public lands; that is what I understood your evidence?—I do not want to spend public money in creating absolute freeholders.

5738. That is not my question; it is not a question of public money. My question is whether it is expedient that there should be a large number of freeholders or not?—I am afraid that I could hardly answer that; it is a very difficult question. But I should not be inclined to spend public money in creating them.

5739. I asked you that, because as you stated you do not wish to diminish the quantity of what you call semi-public land in the hands of the Charity Commissioners, and the Crown, and so forth, it seems to me that you are in favour of creating large landowners rather than these small owners?—In the sense that I like the public to

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

be landowners or the public authorities to be landowners, yes; but not that I want to create large private landowners.

5740. What advantage do you see in having a public landowner instead of a private landowner?—That the rent would go to the people.

5741. It is a question of small holders, and your evidence appeared to me to be rather against the increase of small holders than otherwise. Would you give to the trustees of these semi-public lands power to let estates of any magnitude; they must let their farms?—Yes.

5742. In any magnitude?—They should let farms of any size.

5743. Then that would rather militate against small holdings, would it not?—That the charity lands might be let in big farms; it might; but it would not be fair to the charity to say: "You shall only let in small farms." It might be well to empower the trustees in some cases to make the creation of small holdings a distinct object of the trust; but I should not be prepared to forbid the letting of charity land in big farms.

5744. Then in the same way you would object to the sale by the charity trustees of any small lots?—If they sold at all I should not object to the sale in small lots.

5745. Then you said that you would let anyone take any vacant land rated at under 5 *s.* an acre, to cultivate it, to which the public had not reasonable access. I should like to ask you how you would deal under those circumstances with plantations?—I think they must be exempted too.

5746. You said too that you would extend the leasing powers of trustees of charities?—I do not recollect saying so.

5747. I understood you to say so?—I do not think so.

5748. You would not extend the leasing powers of trustees of charities?—I am not prepared to say that I would.

5749. Then you have no distinct opinion one way or the other upon that subject?—No.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5750. I understood you to say that you thought that there ought to be an alternative scheme to Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, so that land should not be acquired merely by the capitalist class who can provide one-fourth of the purchase money?—I did not quite use those words; I think that the Bill should provide both for what I call the free tenant and for the restricted owner.

5751. That is for the poorer tenant as well as for the capitalist?—Yes.

5752. Even although the local authority should run some risk?—Yes.

5753. On account of the public advantage that there would be?—Yes.

5754. Do you believe that it would be of any value to pass a Bill like that which Mr. Jesse Collings has introduced without compulsory powers?—It would be better than nothing, a good deal.

5755. Would it be of any practical value?—It would be worth having, certainly, one way or another.

5756. Do

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

5756. Do you think that it would be likely without compulsory power, that any large amount of land would be acquired by the local authority?—A little might.

5757. I say a large quantity?—I could not say.

5758. Or an adequate quantity?—No.

5759. Under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill the proposition is to have what would be in effect, a fixed rent, is it not?—Yes.

5760. The process is represented as being interest upon part of the purchase money, but as a matter of fact would it not be a perpetual rent?—It might be called so.

5761. Instead of a fixed rent, I understand you to say that you would prefer to have a fair rent?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

5762. Which might either rise or fall?—That is so.

5763. So that the tenant, as I call him, or the freeholder, as he is sometimes called, should always have a profit for the expenditure of his capital and labour upon his farm?—He certainly must have enough to live on.

Chairman.

5764. Is there anything else that you wish to say to the Committee?—I wish to correct one of my former answers. I think that settlement and entail must to some extent have prevented the formation of small holdings, because they prevent the breaking up of large estates.

Mr. SAMPSON MORGAN, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

5765. YOU are, I think, Secretary of the National Fruit Growers' League?—Yes.

5766. And you have come, I think, to tell us what bearing the question of small holdings has upon the cultivation of fruit?—Yes.

5767. What experience have you had in connection with the matter?—For some years I was a fruit grower in Surrey. I have also been editor of the leading horticultural journal of London, and I have had further information extending over 10 years in connection with English markets, and have dealt with and handled thousands of tons of all sorts of foreign and English fruit. Beyond that, my connection with the National Fruit Growers' League, not only as secretary but as leading lecturer, entitles me to form a reliable opinion upon most points in reference to the proper and profitable utilization of the land.

5168. What is the principal impediment which you have found to the successful cultivation of fruit in this country?—The real impediment is that the people cannot get the land; in consequence of this we have been negociating with Sir Saul Samuel, Governor General of New South Wales, with Mr. Braddon, Governor General of Tasmania, and with the Governor General of New Zealand, finding it impossible for the members of our League to get land, that is, small holdings, in this country.

5769. I want you to confine yourself to the home question, and to tell us whether you have any instances of this difficulty of which you speak in obtaining land for the purpose of cultivating fruit on a small scale?—Yes, I have several cases which I can verify, inasmuch as I conducted the cases myself. I might first of all mention that these cases arose because we had 50 young men with capital who wanted these small holdings of land. Their capital consisted of from 50 *l.* to 250 *l.* each. The first case I tried was at Canterbury. The place consisted of a house and eight and a-half acres of land; seven acres were grass; the rent was 60 *l.*; the place was just outside the town, this accounts for the high rent; but the stipulations were fatal to fruit growing, or I might say to the proper utilisation of this land. The landlord would not grant a

Chairman—continued.

lease, only an agreement for three years: further he would not consent to have his grass broken up to be worked by the spade; he would sooner keep it unlet. It is unlet still, and has remained so to my knowledge for over a year. The second case consisted of seven acres of land at Staplehurst in Kent. The land was all grass and one cottage; the rent was 30 *l.*; the owner would not grant a lease, only a yearly tenancy; on no account would he permit the grass to be broken up, he would keep it empty rather. The third case consisted of 55 acres near Sevenoaks, with two houses on the farm. This was advertised for months to my knowledge. I offered to take 10 acres at 10 *s.* per acre more than the owner wanted for the 55 acres. The offer was refused. If the whole was taken only a three years' agreement would be granted.

5770. Now in these three cases the length of tenure offered is too short, I understand, to induce the tenant to proceed to fruit growing?—It is totally useless.

5571. What lease does a tenant require who proposes to deal with that sort of cultivation?—From 21 years; and I myself would not take a place unless I could get a 50 years' lease of it.

5772. Have you been able to place any of these 50 young men who applied to you for land?—Not one.

5773. In all cases has the difficulty been similar to that that you have described in these cases?—Exactly the same.

5774. If this difficulty were removed, do you think that there would be a large demand for land for fruit cultivation?—I have not the slightest doubt of it.

5775. I suppose that it is only particular land that is suitable for the cultivation of fruit?—Nearly all land that will grow good grass will grow good fruit.

5776. Do you know cases where fruit cultivation has been carried on and has now ceased?—Certainly.

5777. Could you give an illustration of that? Yes, I have a very good case with regard to Lodsworth, once a flourishing village in Sussex, surrounded on every side for many miles with orchards. So much was this district famed for

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Chairman—continued.

its fruit that buyers used to go down even from Kent to purchase it in large quantities every season. The village now consists of a few straggling cottages, and the flourishing fruit farms have all disappeared; the orchards have become merged into permanent pasture, and large root and grain farms, simply because the owners would not give that security of tenure without which the land cannot be planted with fruit trees or worked in an intelligent manner.

5778. In this case, as I understand, the land was being worked as orchards some time ago?—Certainly.

5779. Was it worked then without the security which you say is necessary?—I might say that fruit culture in this country has been rapidly put out of cultivation on account of the old and useless systems, and under the new system which we advocate, which is simply an imitation of the continental growers, choice varieties of trees must be planted in an intelligent manner, and the cultivation must be carried on by intelligent men, and all this means money. Capital must be invested in the land if the land is to be devoted to the production of choice fruit. Therefore if the old farmers years ago were not particular with regard to leases for fruit culture it becomes a necessity at the present time.

5780. And you attribute the failure of fruit culture where it was previously carried on, in the first place to the necessity for improved methods, and in the second place to the impossibility of securing those improvements without security of tenure and other conditions?—Certainly.

5781. Do you think that fruit cultivation can be made to pay?—Yes, it is a most profitable industry.

5782. You have been a fruit cultivator yourself?—Yes.

5783. Can you tell us anything about your experience?—My experience was that I never obtained an average of less than 35 *l.* an acre profit from the land; and I can refer to other cases. I can give the case, for instance, of Mr. S. T. Wright, of Glewstone-court-gardens, Ross, Herefordshire, who is obtaining, and does obtain every year, an average of 50 *l.* an acre profit from special varieties of fruit trees.

5784. How many acres did you cultivate?—Ten acres, but not all fruit. This Mr. Wright has about five acres, and is extending his fruit orchards every year.

5785. Is he growing apples and pears, or small fruit?—Apples and pears; hardy fruit. Mostly apples and pears.

5786. Is there a good market for such fruit?—The demand is unlimited, and has never been satisfied to my knowledge. At the present time I may say there are no apples in the whole of this country, any rate not English fruit, although they ought to be in the English markets; they are not to be obtained, not if five sovereigns a bushel were offered for them.

5787. Do you find that the English fruit fetches as good a price as the American and foreign fruit?—From 25 to 50 per cent. more when sold upon the same day and in the same markets. I have sketched out a short contrast of the various

Chairman—continued.

articles which I think will show an average from 25 to 50 per cent. I have taken mushrooms, French beans, tomatoes, new potatoes, and apples, and the average will show from 25 to 50 per cent. in favour of English produce.

5788. Where do you get your experience of the profitability of fruit culture on different soils. I understand that you have failed in your efforts to secure land for fruit cultivation in the cases in which application has been made to you?—It totally failed.

5789. Therefore your experience is derived only from existing orchards?—My experience of the suitability of the soil, do you mean?

5790. You have told us that, in your opinion, fruit can be grown profitably on all soils where good grass will grow?—Mostly.

5791. And I understand from your account that you think it can be grown very profitably, and much more profitably than ordinary produce?—Yes.

5792. I want to know on what you base that opinion?—Simply on my practical experience of growing and seeing the demand which exists, and the suitability of our climate and soil.

5793. But you have not had practical experience of that, because, as I understood from you, you have not been able to plant any people on the land in the cases you refer to?—I can refer to another case at Petworth in Sussex. The land is rented by a little cultivator, and his average is over 50 *l.* per acre. I might say that my figures have been doubted, and Mr. Thomas Potter, M.P., honorary secretary of the Cobden Club, came across this particular holding at Lodsworth in Sussex, when he was on a visit to Midhurst; he went over it, and found the average obtained by this party was considerably over 50 *l.* per acre; and, at his suggestion, I went down and inspected this small farm; it consists of five acres of land. There are two brothers; they have six children each; they have lived upon those five acres, saved money, and got a banking account; and they have obtained that out of fruit growing; by growing the special varieties we advocate should be grown, and on our system.

5794. But is not theirs rather a special soil?—Certainly not. There are 1,000 acres next to that man which have been lying idle for years, and which cannot be obtained for any rent. In fact this small grower himself has applied to the landlord to grant him a few more acres of land than he has but he has refused.

5795. How do you account for the suicidal conduct of these landlords who, having land that they cannot let, refuse to let it for this splendid profit from this fruit cultivation?—I cannot account for it; but there is the fact. There is the fact at Midhurst. I took it from the party's own lips; he cannot extend his fruit from being unable to obtain the land. I might also mention a fact which is rather worse; there are over 1,000 acres of land at Cranleigh in Surrey, there the landowner for three or four years has never let the place, it is splendid meadow land, there are nine houses on the estate, all empty and dropping to pieces, and the same point also arises there: Why is that being done? I can only say from varied experience

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Chairman—continued.

rience that it has been done, and these two cases are not isolated cases by any means.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

5796. Is this landlord you are referring to now a rich man or a poor man?—He is a wealthy man; in fact, both of the two I have been referring to are gentlemen of title, I believe. I might mention that the place I am referring to I have seen myself. I have walked over the land at Cranleigh.

Chairman.

5797. At the present time the importation of foreign fruit is very large, is it not?—Yes, and increasing every year.

5798. You have some figures to give us of the American apple trade, I believe?—Yes, with regard to the years 1885 and 1886.

5799. What is the amount of imported apples?—I have got the total amount separate from three ports; Liverpool received 546,630 barrels in 1886, Glasgow received 176,682 barrels in 1886, London received 145,982 barrels in 1886, and various other ports received 23,129 barrels in the same year. Compared with the imports of 1885, that will show an increase in favour of 1886 of over 100,000 barrels of apples alone, which is equal to 300,000 bushels (each barrel holds three bushels) of fruit. And this increase may traced in every other kind of produce sent in to the English markets.

5800. And yet I understand you to say that in spite of this foreign importation, the price for English apples in the market is higher than that for American apples?—By from 25 or 50 per cent. on the same day. With regard to that apple question, it might be a point for the Committee to see that we are now importing apples from Tasmania in large quantities, and during the last week they have realised as high as 27*s.* a bushel-case for the fruit.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5801. Are they a special kind of apple?—No, we can grow better in this country, far better.

5802. What is the name of the apple; what similar apple is there in this country?—They are the same sort, the same varieties; they grow the King Pippin and the Blenheim orange; they grow exactly the same varieties.

5803. Would it be the Blenheim orange that was largely grown at that village in Sussex where it is grown so profitably?—In the case I referred to, I presume, yes.

5804. The Blenheim orange and the pippin?—Cox's orange pippin.

5805. And russets?—No, not the russets; nearly all the russet apples come from America and Canada.

Chairman.

5806. Your view is that England is at no disadvantage in comparison with these foreign countries in point of climate or soil?—With regard to the climate, I was confirmed at Swanley last year by a Professor; he accounted for it in some scientific manner, which I forget at present; but my statement was this: "Our climate is suitable in every respect for the production, among other things, of perfect fruit. True, in America they have more sun, but they have a shorter season; our season is more pro-

Chairman—continued.

longed, and as a matter of fact our fruit receives almost as much, if not as much heat from the sun. We have a slower growth, but this is more suitable for the production of a perfect fruit. The suitability of our climate is proved from the fact that last year I exhibited pears grown in the open air in Kent which measured from four to five inches in length, and weighed from eight to 16 ounces each, and sold at 2 *s.*, 4 *s.*, and 6 *s.* per dozen pears." I was going to make a suggestion to the Committee that I should be perfectly willing at any time while the Committee is sitting to produce these samples of fruit which have astonished a good many people; they were grown by a man who was uneducated; they were grown in the open air, near Chatham, the rail passes the fruit farm; I could produce his fruit and show to the Committee, and compare them with foreign produce, and show the difference in price.

5807. All the cases which you have given us are cases in the southern counties, which are supposed to be particularly good for some kinds of fruit; have you any cases from the northern counties?—Herefordshire is supposed to be a very indifferent country; with regard to all the Midland and Southern Counties they are perfectly suitable. But I might mention that this very week, I saw in the papers an account of a terrific crop of strawberries obtained somewhere about Aberdeen.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5808. On the Deeside?—Yes, I believe that is correct.

Chairman.

5809. There are other fruits, I suppose, which, in your opinion, could be grown in England besides the fruits of which you spoke; apples and pears?—Yes, nearly all kinds of fruit.

5810. Tomatoes?—Yes, and grapes.

5811. Do you consider that grapes can be grown in the open air?—No, under glass; tomatoes, strawberries, and all kinds of soft and stone fruits.

5812. And of all these we receive very large quantities from abroad?—Thousands of tons.

5813. Which you think can be grown in this country to advantage?—Every ounce.

5814. Now, in order to increase the growth of fruit in this country you want to see an alteration in the tenure of land?—Yes.

5815. What form do you think the alteration should take; what are the changes which you desire?—With regard to obtaining this land for fruit growing, what I say is this: that any quantity of land in this country can be bought for 25 *l.* an acre; if that land is let out to cultivators at 1 *l.* per acre per annum, in 50 years the whole of that money and all incidental expenses is paid, and by that means the State, if it advanced that money, would become the owner, yet without cost. Now, a capitalist told me, while I was at Cranleigh, that he would buy land and let it out to our young men; the land could be bought for 20 *l.* per acre; this capitalist, when he sent in his conditions, required 40 *l.*; thus directly the capitalist appears upon the scene it is impossible to do any good.

5816. But then, do you propose to buy your

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Chairman—continued.

land below the market price?—No; I say buy the land at the market value, and I put that market value from the average of thousands of acres in this country at 25 *l.* an acre.

5817. What is there to prevent your capitalist from buying this land at 25 *l.* an acre?—No capitalist can be found who will do that, because he wants to sell it again.

5818. Is not that because there is a certain risk about the transaction?—There is not the slightest risk about it.

5819. Do you consider the capitalists of this country so blind to their own interests that they will not enter upon a good speculation even when it is at their door?—It is rather the reverse; we can find no capitalist who will speculate to benefit the labourer who is being driven into the towns.

5820. That is not the point; you were not putting it as a question of philanthropy; you were saying that it is so profitable an investment?—Then I would suggest a moderate profit. You see the capitalist wanted to double his outlay.

5821. But if you can make 35 *l.* an acre easily out of this land, and 50 *l.* in exceptional cases, you could afford to pay a capitalist a very good price if he would offer you the land on conditions you think to be suitable?—I must say that that seems a point against us; but on the other hand, why should the labourers of this country be driven into the hands of the capitalist?

5822. There would be no disadvantage to the labourers of the country in having to pay a fair rent?—Certainly not.

5823, It does not matter whether they pay that fair rent to what you call a capitalist, or to the greatest capitalist of all, that is to say, the State?—Certainly not; but, on the other hand, the point I want to bring out is this, that the capitalist is not satisfied unless he has such an exorbitant profit that the land becomes totally useless.

5824. But is it not the fact that at the present time landlords generally are not getting more than, we will say, from 2 to 4 per cent. upon their capital?—That is so.

5825. Then do you not think that they would be very glad, many of them, or that, at all events, there would be capitalists who would be glad to get 6 per cent. with perfect safety?—But what about the question of tenure?

5826. Forgive me, if you will confine yourself to the question of profit?—Certainly.

5827. Could not a labourer or working man who can get 35 *l.* to 50 *l.* an acre out of the land afford to pay at the rate of 6 per cent. upon 25 *l.* an acre, we will say, as the price of the land?—Yes.

5828. Then have you not there all the conditions and all the facilities which would stimulate capital to embark in this extremely profitable speculation?—No, for there is this point: that although the landlords might be willing, and I believe some of them are (in fact, some that we have negociated with are) to advance the money and split up their farms; they will not give an equitable lease.

5829. But would it not pay a person who was not a landlord; would it not pay a capitalist to come in and buy the land of the landlord at 25 *l.* an acre, and let it again upon the terms which you say are necessary; that is to say, upon a long lease, provided he could get 6 per cent. for his capital?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

5830. At the present time a capitalist does not expect to get more than from 3½ to 4 per cent. for his capital on good security?—No.

5831. He would not get so much upon debentures?—No; but still, as a matter of fact, a capitalist cannot be found to do this on equitable terms.

5832. But is not that because the speculation is not quite as good as you have represented it?—No; certainly not. I might point out that directly these trees are planted the land in the market is worth, at any rate, from 15 to 20 per cent. more than the land adjoining, because the trees must grow into money.

5833. Then I say, how is it that, having all these facts, there being so much loose capital in the country, you cannot persuade anybody to engage in this industry at a time when people are filling up the lists of speculations in this country three or four times over?—It is a question that cannot be answered any more than this question: why has our Government neglected to foster those industries which have been neglected in no other country but our own? France has her schools of agriculture; every State of America and Australia have their horticultural colleges; England has none.

5834. That is a totally different part of the subject; it may be worth considering in connection with fruit growing; not in connection with facilities for small holdings: what I wanted to see is, why a speculation which at first sight appears so profitable, is rejected by capitalists; and why, if it is rejected by capitalists, it should be safe for the State to undertake it?—That is a question I am not in a position to answer; it does seem, upon the face of it, rather unaccountable. But they are at present ignorant of the profitableness of fruit culture.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

5835. With regard to the success of fruit growing, I suppose much depends upon planting the right sort of trees on the soil most adapted for them?—Exactly. The principal point is this, that the right varieties should be grown. And when I say that, I might further say that in the English markets there is a certain demand for certain varieties which only the foreigners grow, and our English growers, led on by "The Royal Horticultural Society" to plant useless varieties which, when they are grown, never sell, find fruit growing unprofitable.

5836. Do I understand you to include currants in your fruit growing?—Very little; I do not believe in fruit growing for jam, because it will presently be overdone; but what we do advocate is the production of hardy fruit: apples, pears, and nuts, for which the demand never can be and never has been satisfied. We advocate soft fruits to be grown simply in small quantities to satisfy local and other needs; not beyond that.

5837. Then different kinds of apples grow better on different kinds of soil, do they not?—Yes, certainly.

5838. You say "yes" to that; what means is there of spreading knowledge among people who are likely to want fruit trees as to that fact?—Simply by issuing leaflets, the same as the Agricultural

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

cultural Department issue leaflets with regard to agriculture.

5839. Are you of the opinion that there are many apples grown in this country that are practically valueless, as compared with the best markets in places where the best fruit could be grown, if the people knew it?—Certainly, there is any quantity of land wasted on that account through being planted with the wrong varieties.

5840. With the wrong kind of fruit?—Yes.

5841. Do you think now that in the case of cottagers who have a dozen trees, there has been any means of instructing them as to the value of careful attention to the trees, especially as to the careful gathering of the fruit, and the storing of it?—None whatever.

5842. But that has a great effect upon its ultimate value in the market?—Certainly.

5843. Does your association study the question of the mode of planting?—Yes.

5844. Have you had any experience in this curious fact, that of apple trees, all in one district upon precisely the same soil, and almost close together, some will be very successful in fruit bearing, and others not, and that that mainly depends upon the question of how they were planted?—Yes; I have not the slightest doubt about that. Of course, soil has something to do with it in this way; with regard to fruit, it may seem a curious fact, but you can have soil too rich for fruit. For instance, in Tasmania. I was in conversation with the Director General upon this point; in certain parts of Tasmania they cannot grow fruit because the land is too rich. On the poorer soils it can be grown. In this country, where the soil is too rich, that sends the tree to wood instead of to fruit. There is an effectual way of checking that, which is this: by simply pruning the roots you send the tree to fruit instead of to wood.

5845. Have you had any experience of planting apple trees, especially on prepared foundations; that is to say, planting them on bricks or slates a foot below the ground level, thereby preventing the roots going down?—Yes, that is a very important point; your suggestion is perfectly right.

5846. Then you are very much in favour of the Small Holdings Bill?—Yes, I am, very much indeed.

5847. Have you any hope that it will lead to give facilities for much greater fruit cultivation?—Yes, certainly, not only for fruit, but also for vegetables; I do not know whether I am entitled to refer to the imports from the market gardens of the Channel Isles; but the whole produce sent from there can be raised here. In 1882 we received 124,000 packages of produce from Guernsey alone; in 1883 it was 161,000; in 1884, 215,000; in 1885, 221,000; in 1886, 247,000; and in 1887, 284,000. And to show you what those figures mean, the 60,000 baskets of grapes sent in one year represent 500 tons, and in value, 40,000 *l.* In Guernsey, under the small holdings system, there, with their half acre, acre, and one acre and a half acre (the average of the whole island is only 3½ acres), these men get a good living, bring up their families well, and are

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

the most moral and industrious race of men I have ever seen.

5848. What were the young men who applied to you to assist them in getting small holdings?—Most of them, strange to say, were Londoners, young men who would like to branch out into something new.

5849. Not agricultural people?—No; yet with the aid of a gardener they could get a good living if they could get from three to five acres of land.

5850. And your experience and your opinion is that without legislation the country will be unable to obtain the number of small holdings necessary for its prosperity?—Certainly; there is no doubt about that.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

5851. With regard to the articles raised in the Channel Islands, is it not the fact that they come into the market very much sooner than the English produce of the same nature?—Yes, certainly, the bulk of them do.

5852. Is not that the reason why so large a quantity comes from there?—Certainly.

5853. Then the extension of small holdings for the growth of these things would not prevent the same produce coming in from the Channel Islands?—Yes, it would; because although it is on account of the earliness, these things meet the demand; we can grow them just as early by doing as they do, that is by using glass. It is one of the greatest mistakes to suppose that the Channel Island grower raises produce in the open air. Nearly the whole of it is raised under glass in greenhouses.

5854. But do what you will you cannot make the climate of England compete with the climate of Jersey and Guernsey?—We can grow better tomatoes in England than they can in the Channel Islands, sample for sample. And while the Channel Island tomatoes are making 6 *d.* per pound, the English will be making 7 *d.* and 8 *d.* at the very same time. You see this is being done, though only in one or two cases.

5855. Turning to another matter: you gave us some instances with regard to the difficulty of obtaining land for fruit growing; the first estate that you mentioned was at Canterbury, which consisted of 8½ acres?—Yes.

5856. What has happened to that land now?—It is still to be let.

5857. You mean it is absolutely waste?—Certainly; the house is empty. I went over the place myself; it is just outside Canterbury, on the top of the hill, next the Wesleyan College. And whilst I am upon that point I might refer to another case. When the French produce comes to Folkestone, which is near Canterbury, it is unloaded and sent 70 miles to Covent Garden Market; it is there sold to the Folkestone buyers, who take the whole produce back again over the same lines to supply Folkestone. Now if small holdings could be obtained outside Folkestone, I think it must be clear that a good profit could be obtained from raising the things that come from France.

5858. Coming back now to the point I asked

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

you about, you say that this land is actually unlet at the present time?—Yes.

5859. And not growing any crops?—No.

5860. Or grazing?—Part of it is grass, and they may let it out for grazing occasionally; but each time I have seen the place, twice in the last year, I have seen nothing there at all.

5861. When was the last time that you visited that place?—Last August, and on next Saturday I shall go and see it again.

5852. Would you give me the name of that place?—I cannot give you the owner's name; but it is next the Wesleyan College; it is the only place there outside Canterbury, at the top of the hill.

5863. Then, with regard to Staplehurst, is the same true there with regard to those seven acres?—With regard to Staplehurst, I cannot say; but this conversation, which I booked down, I took from the owner's lips in my own place at Brixton. He came up to see me. I put these questions, I may say, purposely, although we were open, and are still open, to take the place; and he said on no account would he permit the grass to be broken up; he would keep it empty rather. I cannot say whether that place is still unlet.

5864. With regard to Sevenoaks, the case you gave us there?—I believe that it was to be seen in an agent's list, in New Bridge-street. I believe, in fact, it has been in his list for some time.

5865. And at Petworth, I suppose, the landlord you referred to was Lord Leconfield?—That may be his name; I could not say, but, at any rate, he is a neighbour there.

5866. In that case, I understand, he does let a portion of his land to that fruit grower, but he declines to let any more?—It is let on a 21 years' lease. This poor fruit grower took it when land, of course, was in demand about 10 years ago, and he took it at 3 *l.* an acre; the farmers round him get the same land for 25 *s.*; but this man cannot get an acre of that land under 3 *l.* per acre, and then only on a 7, 14, or 21 years' lease. The farmers have the same land for 25 *s.* beyond his hedge.

5867. But do the farmers have a lease of their land?—No, because they do not require it.

5868. Does this fruit grower want a longer lease than 21 years?—He would like, of course, to get it for 50 years, and he certainly should have it, because when this lease expires the value will be increased considerably, because the trees after 21 years would only be in their prime.

5869. Then, I understand that in this case the land round this fruit grower's tenancy is not left to waste?—No.

5870. But it is occupied by farmers?—Yes.

5871. You are not aware whether any difficulty would be raised by the farmers through cutting off a portion of their land, and so diminishing their farms?—Of course, I cannot say.

5872. Then, it comes to this, that the only case you are certain about, where the land is not let, is the case at Canterbury?—Is the case at Canterbury out of these three, as far as I can say positively.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

5873. If the cultivation is so profitable as you say, does it necessarily follow that 3 *l.* an acre rent would be a very extravagant rent?—Certainly not. I should advise anyone to pay 3 *l.* an acre, if they could get the land on a lease of 50 years; it would not be excessive, but it would be considerably more than the farmers are paying.

5874. But, as I understand you to say, the farmers have only yearly holdings, whereas this man might have had a 21 years' lease. Surely the terms offered him, therefore, were much more favourable?—Yes, only of course the man does not like his industry to be taxed. For instance, take a man with energy, who sinks his capital to raise fruit, why should he pay 3 *l.* if the agricultural value is only 25 *s.*, and, in the face of this fact, that thousands of tons of foreign produce which could be grown at home are being sent into this country. What we want, as a league, is to prevent the foreigner taking the money out of the country as he does.

5875. But you do not contemplate the possibility of the landlord making more by letting his land for fruit growing; you only contemplate the possibility of the occupier making more by it?—No; I certainly say that the landowner should benefit and the tenant also. I am quite agreeable to that.

5876. When was your association formed?—It has been in existence as a league only 12 months, but we have worked on behalf of the fruit growing movement for 10 years.

5877. Do you consider that the association has accomplished anything in the direction of fruit growing?—Certainly.

5878. Whereabouts?—In Essex, and in different parts of the country, but specially in Essex, round Southend. I think I may say we have been the means of hundreds of acres being planted with fruit. But I would also say to the Committee, and I think it a very important thing, that the Government should furnish to all growers practical information. There are many men planting fruit trees who, in the course of five or six years will find that they have wasted their money on account of not planting the right varieties.

5879. What is your idea about the Government finding instruction for these people as to how to pursue their trade?—I believe that the Agricultural Department, from the leaflets they sent me, are doing very good work, inasmuch as they are sending out practical information with regard to agriculture; but with regard to horticulture, it has been totally neglected in this country, yet it has been adopted, and taken up by every other country. If the Government were to issue practical brief leaflets this difficulty could be obviated and a vast amount of good would be done.

5880. And you think it possible to convey information in regard to horticulture in some such way as about agriculture?—Certainly.

5881. You said that capital must be invested in the land if it is to produce high-class fruit; do you mean by capital high-class fruit trees or do you mean manure, and so on?—There are two ways; we want better trees, which means a little

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

little expense, and we want them planted in a better, not a scientific manner; and we want capital to erect glasshouses and frames, if we desire to compete with the Channel Island growers.

5882. But I want to fix your attention upon the word "capital," whatever it may mean; if it be the capital of the investment, a considerable amount of capital, you cannot be contemplating the case of poor people cultivating fruit?—I do, for this party at Petworth who has now his banking account, used to be a labourer, used to drive a cart at Deptford; he bought an old horticultural book, and that was the secret of his success; he could hardly write a leaflet. That man had no capital, but by plodding on he made money, turned it over, sunk it in the land, and improved his place.

5883. Then you use the word "capital" somewhat loosely, although I understand what you mean?—Perhaps I may have done so.

5884. You spoke with confidence of all land being suitable for fruit growing; but is it not notorious that fruit can be grown better in one part of the country than in another?—There is something in that. I do not think I said all land, I said that it was a good test, and the best test that where grass grows well fruit will grow well also. No doubt counties vary, but I think I would undertake to grow fruit in any of our Southern or Midland Counties, fruit as good as can be grown in Kent, and Kent is the best county that we have.

5885. You spoke of France and the Channel Islands, but they have more uniform sunshine there than we have, have they not?—In the Channel Islands they cannot grow tomatoes in the open air. We can. In the Channel Islands the daffodils in spring come into Covent Garden Market seven days after they come from the south coast of Devonshire in this country.

5886. And you contemplate growing fruit under glass; but, surely, there again you do not contemplate that being done by persons in humble life to any great extent?—The bulk of the fruit and early produce would be grown in the open air.

5887. Let me understand you then, because here again I come upon an apparent conflict between what you contemplate being done and the class of people who are to do it. Of course anybody can cultivate fruit of a very rare kind under glass, always supposing he can have the glass; but we are speaking of the occupants of small holdings; how do you contemplate their cultivating fruit under glass?—If parties could get, say five acres of land; I do not believe in the very large holdings, but five acres is sufficient; a man can get a good living from five acres; some men with no capital would take them up, and give part of their time to their own holding and part to their neighbours. Then, with regard to growing fruit, very little is grown under glass, but the apples and pears and nuts can be grown in the open air, and the agricultural labourer with a leaflet or two could do that, and the demand cannot be satisfied, not if small holdings were increased by the thousand.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

5888. I think you said that when you were trying to get some of this uncultivated land you applied to some gentlemen with capital to help you?—Yes; we applied to one or two; one in particular.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

5889. I did not quite catch the difficulties you met with?—I went and I saw the land myself at Cranleigh, in Surrey; the land is just outside the station, and I believe there is about 200 acres to be let; the owner wanted 20 *l.* an acre for the land; we were willing to allow fair interest, of course, for the capital to take that land split up into five-acre holdings. Apparently the capitalist agreed to it; he is a solicitor in London, and lives down there. I asked him to put it into writing, to lay before the League, and he did, and the price he put was double 40 *l.* an acre. Now, of course, we can hardly see why we should advise any of our members to pay 40 *l.* an acre for land which is bought at 20 *l.* and is only worth 20 *l.*

5890. But that land at 40 *l.* an acre would have come to 1 *l.* 12 *s.* a-year rent?—About that.

5891. That would not be too heavy a rent to pay?—No; but we can hardly see how we can (and we shall never give in upon that point) advise anyone connected with the League to take the land if they are to pay more than a fair agricultural rent, or a fair value.

5892. I quite understand your position sentimentally; but still as a matter of business, you have fifty young men here with capital of their own varying from 50 *l.* to 250 *l.* a-piece; you have land suitable for fruit growing which you can get by the intervention of capital for 32 *s.* an acre, and yet you do not take it?—No, because we are not going to be the means of any capitalist putting 20 *l.* an acre in his pocket by these means.

5893. I understand that reason; but is that the chief reason?—Yes.

5894. Did it occur to you that you might have got these fifty young men to put their capital together and to have bought the land?—There is something in that; but our aim as a league is not only to get the small holdings for people with capital, but for parties without.

5895. But you could have put the money together, making the necessary capital, and have started, practically, a kind of co-operative undertaking, each with his own little farm?—There we should exceed our bounds as a league. I might point out with regard to expecting capitalists to do this for nothing, that we do not expect it; but, on the other hand, every working member of the League gives his services free, and we fancy that if any good is to be done somebody else should take up the work in the same spirit also.

5896. Not as a matter of speculation, but pure philanthropy?—Not, at any rate, to get 100 per cent. profit.

5897. Then you are very anxious that, apart from private capitalists, some means should be taken to give you some facilities for getting this land?—Yes.

5898. Through a local court?—Yes.

5899. You do not care as far as I can gather from your evidence upon what terms the land is obtained, provided you have a fair rent and security of tenure?—Certainly.

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

5900. I want you to go a little further; would you prefer, under these circumstances, to be a leaseholder, say, with a long lease, or with a perpetual lease with a fixed rent; or would you prefer these small fruit growers on the small farms to be freeholders, or to come under a scheme such as that sketched by Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—I should say it would be much better if the grower was the leaseholder, provided he had security of tenure, provided also that the rent was to be arranged about once in seven years, and that any increase in the rent should not take into consideration any improvement made by the tenant.

5901. I quite agree to all those terms. Then, what are the reasons you would prefer that to either of the other schemes?—That if a man takes a place on rent hardly any outlay is needed.

5902. No preliminary outlay?—None at all.

5903. He has all his capital to go into the business, and make the best of it?—Certainly.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5904. I suppose there is no part of the country where you cannot get plenty of land to buy, if you want it?—Any amount of land can be bought in large quantities, but very little land can be obtained in small quantities.

5905. In the southern counties, are there not a good many small properties always for sale?—There are none to be had on long leases.

5906. In your experience, are there many parts of the country where the landlords will not lease?—On a 50 years' lease?

5907. No; I mean 21 years' lease?—That is not sufficient, because we cannot compete with the foreigner on that lease; therefore, he will continue to deluge the English markets with his fruits. We must have proper security of tenure.

5908. Do you find that, in most parts of the country the landlords are willing to give a 21 years' lease?—I believe you could get a 21 years' lease in most parts of the country, but not at a fair agricultural rent. The last I applied to were Messrs. Dowsett and Woods; the land was 60 *l.*, and they offered to grant a 50 years' lease if we paid 100 *l.*

5909. You mean the interest on 100 *l.*?—No; 100 *l.*

5910. £100 an acre?—No; there were about 30 or 40 acres. If we had a lease we had to pay 40 *l.* more for the farm per annum.

5911. Do you think that difficulty could be got over by any system of compensation for the fruit trees in case the tenant is turned out?—I fancy so, certainly.

5912. Have you studied the present law with regard to compensation for improvements?—No.

5913. There is a Bill under which, with the consent of the landlord, a small holder can plant trees with the right to compensation; do you think that is sufficient?—It might be.

5914. Do you think that the landlord ought to consent to compensation?—If they did not, I would not plant their land with fruit trees.

5915. But you do not know whether the landlords would be willing; you have had no experience of the working of that Act?—I should hardly fancy they would; from my experience of landlords, I should say certainly not.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

5916. Do you know how it is about putting up glass, whether the tenant has the right to carry off the glass?—I believe he has, if it is built upon a wood structure.

5917. Regarding the want of sufficient fruit growing in this country, are there not some other reasons, such as the difficulty of sending small parcels at a reasonable rate by railway, and the difficulty of markets where the producers and consumers can be brought together?—With regard to the railway preferential rates, no doubt they ought to be remedied, inasmuch as a grower can send from Guernsey to London produce which must be unshipped and put on the rail for less money than anyone can send from London to Manchester, although I believe the distance is three times as great.

5918. And has not the small grower very great difficulty as compared with the large grower in arranging his railway dispatches?—There is a slight difficulty; but of course as against the preferential railway rates, it would be impossible for him to compete with the foreigner.

5919. Is the difficulty only slight between the large and the small grower with regard to sending by railway?—When it comes to some of the smaller quantities which some of the small growers send, no doubt there is a large difference, but it is nearly totally useless to send small parcels of fruit any distance at all.

5920. Why?—Because the buyers will not buy small parcels; they like to buy larger quanties: thus the difficulty, to a certain extent, is in the markets. But with regard to this party at Midhurst, the question has been raised with regard to small holdings that you must be near a road, a railway, or a market; now that is a great mistake. This party at Midhurst has buyers coming down from London, over 70 miles, who will buy his produce on the trees without sending it away at all, simply because he grows the right varieties, and it is the growers who grow the wrong varieties in ignorance, no doubt, who send their produce to the markets which meets no demand, because it is not wanted.

5921. About the difficulty that the small grower has because nobody will buy small parcels; they want to buy by the ton; is not that on account of want of markets where small people can come in contact with small people?—I have good reason to be opposed to the London markets generally, and to Covent-garden Market in particular; but I must confess that it is an impossibility to find out a plan to supersede them; I believe, from experience, it cannot be done, for the buyers will go to the old centres, and not to new markets; and I do not believe an extension of the markets in London would do any good; it might in the country.

5922. I am rather talking not of new markets, but of the old markets; the old style where the housewife went to market, and the purchaser went to market and bought her fruit and chickens from the person who produced them?—No doubt that would do some good.

5923. Take the case of Folkestone, you say French

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

French fruit is brought over to Folkestone, sent on to London, and bought there, and sent back again to Folkestone over the same lines, and that there no facilities for growers near Folkestone; is there any popular market of that kind in Folkestone?—Yes, there is a good demand in Folkestone, but the growers round about Folkestone cannot get the land which would induce them to plant fruit trees, or put capital into the land.

5924. If a woman brings a basket of her own produce into Folkestone, is there any place where she can sell it to the people who want to buy it; I mean to the consumer?—No.

5925. Is there no place where she can take a basket and expose it for sale to the customers in Folkestone who want to buy such produce?—No.

5926. Then, with regard to that particular place, Folkestone, is there any difficulty in getting land near Folkestone for growing fruit?—Yes; the fatal objection is that the land cannot be got on a proper lease.

5927. I was at Folkestone the other day, and I noticed a good many allotments outside Folkestone?—Yes, allotments which, in my opinion, do as much harm as good, for they do not enable the growers to grow enough by which they can compete with the foreigners. If a man grows a few vegetables what good does it do him? It may do him good physically, but beyond that it puts no money in his pocket, as, in my opinion, it tends to reduce his wages.

5928. I understand that Lord Radnor is the principal landowner there; will he not give leases; he has a great deal of country land?—There is no landowner near Folkestone that I have come across yet who would give a 30 or 50 years' lease; and if they give a 21 years' lease want to force the rent up to an unnatural figure.

5929. I was talking the other day to a small allotment holder at Folkestone who had a bit of glass and grew cucumbers. Supposing that his wife took the cucumbers to sell at Folkestone can he get a good price for them there?—Yes.

5930. Is there no convenient market at Folkestone?—Not where producer and consumer meet.

5931. Is it the case at the present moment; is there any truth in what we are constantly told that it is hardly worth while for a small man to grow fruit in this country, even in the neighbourhood of London, at present, because there is no means of selling it; that fruit that is worth a farthing in the country is sold by a greengrocer in London for 6 *d.*?—Your question raises one or two points; but with regard to the last one I might say, generally speaking, that for every 100 *l.* worth of produce sold in our markets only 25 sovereigns find their way into the grower's pocket.

5932. That is the difficulty about the middleman?—Yes, partly of course.

5933. But apart from the question of the professional fruit grower, and speaking of the cottager within 20 miles of London, who grows a little fruit in his spare time, do you think he can sell that to advantage?—If he grows the

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

right varieties, he can sell it in his neighbourhood immediately.

5934. Then with regard to the question of getting the right varieties, I understand your object to be that the Government, in instituting the Agricultural Department, should also make the Department horticultural?—Yes.

5935. I think you said that that is the case in other countries?—In every other country.

5936. Do you know anything of the Agricultural Department of the United States; is it not the case in that Department that a very great deal is done by the Government to promote the best kind of garden fruit and produce?—Yes, they have a college in every State in America, where they give information free, analyse manures, and everything else the farmer wants free; they give all information free; they issue leaflets and huge books every year full of practical and good information.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

5937. In what counties have you special experience?—In Kent, Sussex, and Essex; and then, beyond all that, the information which I received while I was editor of the Horticultural Journal, and I received some hundreds of letters upon these points, all bear me out in what I say.

5938. I only wanted to know where your personal experience was?—In Sussex, Essex, and Kent.

5939. The metropolitan counties?—Yes.

5940. You say very rightly, as I know myself that a 21 years' lease, at least, is necessary for fruit growing, and that 50 years is better, and the landlords generally decline to give that length of lease; can you give the reason why they decline?—Yes, I presume because they fancy the land may be worth more money before the end of the term.

5941. In rural districts, I suppose, sporting rights have something to do with that?—I cannot say upon that point.

5942. And in the neighbourhood of towns the possibility of land coming in for buildings would have something to do with that?—Certainly.

5943. Then with others, they might be unable to give a sufficient length of lease in consequence of settlements, entails, and so forth?—Certainly.

5944. And, of course, with others, whose estates are mortgaged they would be unable to do so?—Certainly.

5945. So that all those points that I have mentioned would require remedy to enable you to obtain small patches of land for horticulture?—In a good many parts I suppose naturally they would.

5946. Are you acquainted with the system of compensation for tenants of market gardens about London and in Middlesex?—No.

5947. Are you aware that there is a special custom?—No.

5948. Can you give us no evidence upon that point?—No.

5949. You said you would prefer a lease

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

nstead of a freehold; you think it would be more advantageous to have a garden on a leasehold tenure than of a freehold tenure?—Yes.

5950. Do you think that a leasehold would be less expensive to the man who took it?—Yes; if the party was to become a freeholder he would have to pay so much more each year.

5951. But suppose he could get a loan of a large portion of the purchase money at a reasonable rate, say 3½ per cent., would he not be in a superior condition to the leaseholder?—Speaking personally, I would prefer to have it on a lease under the restrictions I have referred to.

5952. But only such a lease as it appears you cannot get?—At present, yes.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

5953. Is this fruit grower of Midhurst an owner or a leaseholder?—He has a little fruit farm on a 21 years' lease, about 11 years of which, I believe, are unexpired.

5954. Does he feel satisfied with his lease?—Not exactly, because he is paying 3 *l* an acre, whereas the neighbouring farmers are only paying 25 *s*., and he does not feel satisfied with that.

5955. Is it on a large estate?—I believe it is a very large estate.

5956. Is that landowner willing to let more land to fruit growers on the same terms?—I believe so. I did not ask on that point specially, but I understood the party to say that he could not get another acre, I fancy he told me, not even on a 21 years' lease; but that if he did he would have to pay 3 *l*. again, and not 25 *s*.

5957. Do you think that this Small Holdings Bill would materially promote the objects of your league?—Certainly, provided of course that the tenant was protected it ought to do a vast amount of good, inasmuch as we can grow in this country a vast amount of food produce which we import from abroad. At any rate we import over 135,000,000 *l*., and I calculate that under a proper Small Holdings Act the English cultivators could raise these things to the extent of half, or at any rate 50,000,000 *l*. in time.

5958. You gave us instances of landlords refusing to let land on reasonable terms, and you said that they were by no means exceptional cases. Are you prepared to advocate any measure to bring such land to the market and make it accessible to the people?—The only scheme I should suggest is that the State should buy land, say at 25 *l*. an acre, and let it to tenants at 1 *l*. per acre per annum for 50 years; and in 50 years the State would recoup itself, and become the owner.

5959. Buy it compulsorily if necessary?—One firm have over 10,000 acres of land, according to their list, which can be bought for from 8 *l*. to 9 *l*., and upwards, but only in large lots.

5960. Supposing that there was a distinct desire in those localities, as evidenced by the elections to the various local councils, on the part

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

of the people to get land, you would advocate giving the compulsory powers to those councils or to the State to buy such land?—Certainly, without hesitation.

5961. Do you think that without compulsory purchase the people could get access to the land for the purpose of fruit growing and other purposes of small holdings?—Certainly, they could not.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5962. Are you quite clear that there is a demand for land for fruit growing, at a fair rent, in excess of the supply?—Certainly; the evidence from all parts of the country is the same. I have just a few words here from the Rev. C. M. Cocks, of Wiltshire, on the point, "Our country districts here are being depopulated." This, he adds, "is one of the saddest features of rural life. I know of many labourers who have been driven to distant lands in order to procure the daily bread denied them in their own." Again, at the last meeting of the Kent and Sussex Labourers Union at Rochester, the secretary said, "From a return of upwards of 200 parishes, they found a considerable reduction in the number of men employed on farms," that is with regard to labourers; but of course, it all refers. "Farmers curtailed labour as much as possible, with the result, that a slovenly system of cultivation prevailed." That is a fact that nobody can deny.

Chairman.

5963. The question is, whether there is a demand for land, but you are giving us an account of the depopulation of the land?—I was going to bring it in incidentally, but at any rate the demand is unlimited; there is not the slightest doubt that there are hundreds of young men in London independent of the agricultural districts, and in most of our large towns thousands of young men with capital, who if they could get the small holdings would readily take them up.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

5964. Do you consider that there is an immediate profit arising from small holdings laid out for the cultivation of fruit?—Yes, certainly, in the first year. They would grow early produce besides fruit.

5965. My object in asking that question is to find out, for those who maintain that there ought to be a prospective profit to the local authority if it lets out land, whether, in your opinion, it would be safe for the local authority to acquire land and let it out for fruit cultivation; Sir Charles Dalrymple asked you a question as to the necessity of capital being laid out; I want to know from you whether you believe there is an opening for comparatively poor people to acquire land, and take it from the local authority without risk to the authority?—Certainly.

5966. That is your experience?—Yes.

5967. Is

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Chairman.

5967. Is there anything further that you wish to state?—I do not know whether the Committee will accept the figures I have drawn out with regard to imports.

5968. With regard to what imports?—They are with regard to imports from the Channel Islands, from Canada, and the United States, and with regard to the produce that could be raised on these small holdings in this country.

*Chairman—*continued.

Chairman.] You can hand them in for the Appendix. (*The same were handed in.*)

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Friday, 21*st June* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. CHARLES ALAN FYFFE, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

5969. I THINK you are the estates bursar of University College, Oxford?—I am.

5970. What property have you in connection with the college under your management?—About 8,000 acres; it is very widely distributed in 12 counties in all parts of England and Wales, and I should say it included agricultural holdings of every possible character from the smallest allotment up to the largest farm on all kinds of soils and under all sorts of cultivation.

5971. I think that you are yourself a landowner?—I own about 300 acres in the Weald of Sussex.

5972. And for a number of years you have had, I believe, considerable experience in the management of land?—Yes.

5973. And I think you have also written on the subject of land tenure and similar subjects?—I have.

5974. In your opinion has there been in recent times any diminution in the number of small owners and cultivators?—As to small owners, I believe the fact to be undisputed that since the beginning of the last century there has been a large decrease in the number of them.

5975. Since the beginning of this century or last century, do you mean?—I am speaking of the beginning of the last century; it has been going on progressively since then. As to small cultivators, I should say that, taking the last 100 years, there has been a considerable diminution in the number of cultivators farming 20 acres and upwards.

5976. From what do you draw that conclusion?—I draw that conclusion in part from the existence of a great number of small farmhouses and buildings which are now used as labourers' cottages, apart from other evidence. In most parts of the country that I know you will find those small houses, with more or less of their buildings still remaining, which show on the face of them that they must have been in former times small farm buildings; they cannot have been anything else; to a great extent they are inhabited by agricultural labourers in the employment of the larger farmers. I have brought a map with me illustrating the country I am best acquainted with round my own farms, showing the holdings as they were at the beginning of the century, and as they are now. The blue lines represent what they are now; the red lines represent what they were at the beginning of this century (*handing in the same*). I have written a list of them there, grouping those together which are now massed in larger holdings.

Chairman—continued.

5977. The process to which you refer is a process then of consolidation of farms?—Yes.

5978. I think this map shows that whereas at the beginning of the century there were 24 holdings, the number has now been reduced to 11?—Yes; I have taken them just as they come, without picking and choosing, in a straight line east and west.

5979. Is that process still going on?—I think the process has been checked partly by the difficulty of letting large farms, and also partly by the change in public opinion in favour of small holdings.

5980. Have you examined the official statistics in reference to this matter?—Yes, I have. The statistics show that up to the year 1851 the agricultural population of the country was increasing in spite of any diminution which there may have been in the holdings. I take it that that increase was caused mainly by the increase in the number of agricultural labourers. But from 1851 to 1881 the rural population has diminished by about one per cent., in spite of the fact that no less than 3,000,000 acres have been added to the farmed area of the country. You have, on the one hand, the process of constant addition of area, amounting in all to about 3,000,000 acres; on the other hand, in spite of this, and the immense increase of the population generally, you have

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Chairman—continued.

have an actual decrease in the rural population during those 30 years from 1851 to 1881.

5981. But do you consider that the diminution of the labouring population is any test of the size of the holdings?—No, I do not. But there is further evidence about that. The census returns give us the actual number of farmers. I will explain presently what I conceive farmers to mean. In 1851 the number of farmers, according to the census, was about 230,000; in 1881 it was almost exactly the same; but the Agricultural Returns of 1886 inform us (p. 2) that most of the land added to the farmed area of the country has been made into smallish holdings. Therefore, if the whole number of farmers has not increased during those 30 years, with the addition of the 3,000,000 acres of land and all the holdings made out of those, there must have been a process of diminution going on among the pre-existing holdings; the thing is demonstrably proved.

5982. Have you got the statistics of particular counties in illustration of what you have been saying?—Yes. I have the statistics of Huntingdonshire, as given in Dr. Ogle's recent paper. Dr. Ogle is one of the principal officers of the census; he has command of the entire statistics of the country; and I have no doubt the Committee have already been made acquainted to some extent with the results of his paper.

5983. What is the paper from which you are now quoting?—It is a paper on the alleged depopulation of the rural districts of England.

5984. Is that a paper which was presented to some society?—It was read before the Statistical Society on the 19th of March of the present year. Dr. Ogle, with whom I am in correspondence on the subject, sent me a copy of the paper. I do not know whether it has yet been published, but I hope the Committee will get it; it is a most important piece of evidence on the subject. Coming to the statistics of this paper, Dr. Ogle takes Huntingdonshire as a specimen of a purely agricultural county; he shows that in Huntingdonshire between 1851 and 1881 there was a decline in the number of holdings of all kinds from 50 to 300 acres, but that in those above 300 acres there was an increase, and that in those under 50 acres there was a small increase too. Dr. Ogle's figures go down only to 1881. I have examined the returns five years later than that in 1886, and the result is a very remarkable one; it is that every one of the large farms in Huntingdonshire of over 1,000 acres, without an exception, every one has disappeared. The process of agglomeration of land which Dr. Ogle dwells on, that is the throwing together of farms of moderate size, and making them big farms, has ended in a complete collapse. Every one has disappeared.

5985. So that the reverse process has now set in?—The reverse process has set in.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

5986. Are you now referring to tenancies?—Yes.

Chairman.

5987. Does that apply to farms of less than 1,000 acres also?—Yes, it does; it applies to farms of over 500 acres, which have diminished by one-half in those five years.

Sir *George Campbell.*

5988. Is Huntingdonshire an agricultural county; does 1,000 acres mean agricultural land?—Yes, not like the Scotch moors; it means *bonâ fide* agriculture.

Chairman.

5989. I suppose that these large farms which have disappeared from the returns have been broken up into smaller holdings?—These large farms which have disappeared from the returns have been broken up into smaller holdings of some kind; but I should presume they have not been broken up into small holdings, because the buildings in that case would not be there.

5990. Have you considered the question of the diminution of the agricultural population, and the cause of that diminution. It appears from what you tell us that in Huntingdonshire the labouring population has considerably diminished?—Yes.

5991. Is that in any way connected with the size of the farms?—My impression is that it is.

5992. If so, we should expect to find, should we not, that the population had diminished in the earlier period up to 1881, because the farms had been consolidated?—Yes.

5993. But then we should expect that as the reverse process has now set in the labouring population would increase again in proportion to the diminution in the size of the farms. Has that been the case?—There has been no return, so far as I know, of the population since 1881. I should imagine that when the next decennial return comes some increase will be shown, although whether the process has been large enough to make any considerable increase I could not say at the present time.

5994. We have had it given in evidence that the diminution in the labouring population in Huntingdonshire has been 20 per cent., which is a very large and extraordinary diminution; and at the same time it has been alleged that Huntingdonshire is rather a county of small holdings by comparison with the neighbouring counties, and the argument drawn from that has been that the smallness of the farms does not necessarily involve a large proportion of labouring population: what would you say with regard to that?—The decrease of population is a very complicated question. It is due to many causes acting together. I was not aware myself that the purely agricultural population had decreased so much as 20 per cent.; I thought it was nearer 12 per cent.

5995. A comparison has been made between Huntingdonshire and Rutlandshire, and we have been told that the holdings under 20 acres in Huntingdonshire are 62 per cent. of the whole number of holdings, whereas in Rutlandshire they are only 47 per cent.; so that Rutlandshire is a county of larger holdings than Huntingdonshire; but, at the same time we are told that in Rutlandshire the agricultural labourers have only

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Chairman—continued.

only diminished by one per cent., whereas in Huntingtonshire they have diminished by 20 per cent.; how would you be disposed to account for that?—I should like to have more statistics about Rutlandshire; I feel unable to deal with Rutlandshire on another person's evidence, and the figures of Rutlandshire are not before me.

5996. I think the returns from which you are quoting are the Agricultural Returns for 1886?—Yes.

5997. Those returns have not been continued, have they?—The return of the sizes of farms has not been continued since 1886; that return was of extreme value for the purposes of the present inquiry, and it is a very great pity that such a return should not have been kept up. Unless there are reasons of expense against the returns, I should imagine that it would be a very great public service if that return could be reinstated to its position in the Agricultural Returns.

5998. Continuing with your examination of Mr. Ogle's figures as regards Huntingdonshire, do they show a decrease in all classes of farms?—Not in the smallest kind of farm; they show a certain increase in those.

5999. Of what farms are you now speaking?—Of farms of under 50 acres; but that, to my mind, is to be explained by the additional land that has been inclosed and added to the farmed area of the country; this has been left out of sight. The fact is, that a very large extent of land has been added to the farmed area during the last 30 years, and I should say that the increase of small holdings comes directly from that.

6000. Do you think that these figures with regard to Huntingdonshire are probably general throughout the kingdom; that the same proportions would obtain?—I should say that Huntingdonshire was a good specimen of a county.

6001. Therefore, in your opinion, it is probable that small holdings of up to 50 acres have not decreased in the last generation?—I should put the limit at 20 acres myself; I doubt whether it is the case with holdings of from 20 to 50 acres. I suspect that the decrease begins with holdings of as low as 20 acres, and that in that particular instance Huntingdonshire may not be typical of the country at large.

6002. Then, summing up your evidence, I understand you to say that the small holdings of under 20 acres have probably not diminished in number?—I think they have not.

6003. But that they have not increased in proportion to the increase of farmable land of the country?—Exactly.

6004. And as regards all classes of farms of above 20 acres, the smaller ones have diminished?—I should say so. Of course one cannot draw the line at an exact number of acres; but I should say it was somewhere about 20 acres, down to quite recent times.

6005. The farms of which you are speaking are purely agricultural farms, I think?—Yes, purely agricultural farms. I should say that there has not been a diminution in the number of market gardens, and nursery plantations, and so on; on the contrary, the holdings that have been decreasing are the purely agricultural small holdings.

Chairman—continued.

6006. But even in the case of market gardens and similar farms of a special character, have they increased in proportion to the demand, do you think, for the articles produced?—Taking foreign importation as the test, I should say that the small holdings have not increased proportionately to the demand; that is to say, that the imports from abroad have increased more rapidly than the possibility of supplying those articles from small holdings at home.

6007. Have you formed any opinion as to the cause of this agricultural proportionate diminution of small owners and cultivators?—A great many causes have been at work; some natural and some artificial.

6008. Perhaps it would be more convenient to deal with the two classes separately, that is to say the owners and the cultivators?—Certainly. In the case of the small owners I should say that artificial causes, for instance legislation, had distinctly been at work in diminishing them; in the case of small cultivators, I should say that natural causes have had a much larger share and artificial causes a smaller share.

6009. Confining ourselves in the first instance to small owners, what do you regard as the object of the legislation of the last one hundred years?—If the Committee will allow me, I should prefer to state this in the words of a very eminent man, Lord Palmerston, whose statement may, I should think, be taken as authoritative. Lord Palmerston, on the 10th of December 1856, wrote as follows to Sir Richard Bethell, his Attorney General, afterwards Lord Westbury.

6010. On what occasion?—On the occasion of Bethell framing his Testamentary Jurisdiction Bill. Lord Palmerston absolutely prohibited him from taking any steps that might impose probate duty on land; not on the ground that it might be unfair, or an excessive burden on land, but that it would conflict with the recognised political necessity in this country of keeping together masses of land in unbroken quantities.

6011. Perhaps you will quote the exact words of his letter?—"I hope that in framing the Testamentary Jurisdiction Bill due care will be taken that its provisions shall not lead directly or indirectly to the extension of probate duty to real property. I consider it essential to the proper working of our constitution to preserve as far as possible the practice of hereditary succession to unbroken masses of landed property. That practice was much broken in upon by the application of the succession duty to landed property; that measure was, however, deemed necessary, but I could not be a party to any further inroad upon a principle which I consider of great political importance, and far outweighing in gravity any of the legal improvements which your Bill is intended to effect."

Sir *George Campbell.*

6012. What is the date of that letter?—The date of that is 10th December 1856. There you have the clear statement of the Prime Minister that no measure, however just or right in itself, would be permitted if it interfered with the practice of hereditary succession to unbroken masses of landed property.

6013. That

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Chairman.

6013. That shows that at that time the distinct policy of the Legislature and of the representative of the Government was to prevent estates from being broken up?—Yes.

6014. And that object has, in your opinion, been secured by the legislation?—In my opinion that object has pervaded the Statute Book of this country for at least a century, for more than a century.

6015. Would you like to illustrate in any way the working of that legislation?—The working of this principle of legislation, I should say, was seen first and directly (taking the points in which it is seen directly first) in the different taxation of real and personal property at death, in order to prevent men having to sell; secondly, in the law of primogeniture in cases of intestacy; thirdly, in the qualification of land ownership for a justice of the peace (some of these measures are, of course, not now existing, I am speaking of the legislation of last century taken as a whole); fourthly, in the principle that everything that was attached to the land became the landlord's property; so that until lately the tenant got no compensation for improvements except by custom.

6016. May I just stop you there to ask you how does that affect the question of small ownership?—Because the landlord, in the natural course of events, would sometimes have had to sell; it has prevented the landlord having to sell.

6017. Do I understand you to mean that he would have had to sell in order to provide the money for paying compensation for improvements?—Yes.

6018. Therefore it would have brought land into the market and it would probably have created a demand, or at all events afforded a supply?—Yes, he would at times not have had the money, and therefore would have been obliged to sell land for the purpose; that rule was one of the causes that kept land out of the market. Fifthly, in the advances made by the State of public money to landlords for improvements; sixthly, in the entire difference of the legislation between bills of sale and mortgages on land.

6019. Would you just explain that?—The object of the Legislature with regard to bills of sale has been publicity. The whole system of mortgages rests on secrecy. Were this principle of secrecy abolished, and landed mortgages treated in the same way as personal mortgages, that is bills of sale, land instead of being habitually charged with mortgages, would be brought into the market to be sold. The motive for the mortgage would not be present in the same force if there were the same publicity attaching to mortgage as must by law attach to a bill of sale.

6020. I take it that this legislation has been, in your opinion, largely influential in so far as it has prevented the landlord from being put under the necessity of finding ready money?—Precisely.

6021. And consequently he has had no inducement to sell his landed property and bring it into the market?—Exactly. The law has devised every possible means for enabling the landlord to do with his land what nobody could do with his personal property, on account of the exigencies that come upon all men to provide ready money.

Chairman—continued.

6022. And lastly?—Lastly, I should say, the laws relative to enclosures, which have very much facilitated the agglomeration of property, leaving small people who are thereby aggrieved, as I should say, practically without redress.

6023. All this legislation is in pursuance of the policy which, as you have told us, was laid down by Lord Palmerston?—Yes.

6024. Can you tell us what was the object of that policy; I mean to say what was the further object besides the direct object of heaping land in unbroken masses; what State interest was supposed to be served thereby?—There was a notion in this country about the time of the French Revolution, that the very safety of the State depended on the class of landowners, that they were the pillar of the State, and that if you removed that central pillar, the community would be exposed to the same collapse as was seen to be going on on the Continent. That is seen in the charges of the judges of that time; words were used, even in the trial of prisoners, which show how strongly the principle then was accepted that landed property, and landed property alone, was the basis of any political stability. I can remember a sentence used by a judge who tried Muir in Scotland for sedition.

6025. At what date was that?—In 1793, in the middle of the Reign of Terror. "As for the rabble, who have nothing but personal property," said the judge, "what hold has the State on them." Those are illustrations of the direct action of the Legislature in keeping land together in masses.

6026. You have referred, among other points, to the question of enclosures; have you any experience of the effect of enclosures?—I have, I myself am a sufferer from enclosures. Two of my own small tenants used to have a run, the one for an unlimited number of cattle, the other for two beasts, along a roadside waste about a mile in length adjoining their farms. Every foot of that has been enclosed by the neighbouring landowner, and unless I actually bring an action against him, I have no redress; it is a case in which you may say that the law is open to everybody; so it is, but it would cost me more than the fee-simple of the land to take it through court after court, and I have simply to put up with it.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6027. You mean that it is enclosed without any law?—Yes, it is enclosed without any law, and in spite of remonstrances.

Chairman.

6028. This is an enclosure of roadside strips, is it?—I should call it a waste rather than a strip; it is so large as to have been of great value for cattle to feed on.

6029. Do you know under what professed right the landlord encloses?—The landlords in this country have an idea that they are entitled to enclose to within 15 feet of the centre of the highway. That was the unfortunate result of an Act of Parliament which was passed with the very good object of giving a ready remedy against people who come actually encroaching on the land used as a highway, but it has had the effect of making

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Chairman—continued.

making the landlords think that if they do not come within the protected 15 feet, they are entitled to everything outside it, the fact being that such enclosures are often doubly illegal; first of all, they are an encroachment on the common-rights of other people, and secondly, they are the enclosures of old highways formerly used as highway. In my own county of Sussex, a hundred years ago the roads were all green or mostly green; they had to be very broad, because the ruts in the centre became so deep that you could not get along, and they were kept of this great breadth in order that people might pick their way wherever they could get along. But every part of the broad green highway was highway as much as any other part. Then 50 years ago the ratepayers chose to macadamise the 20 feet in the centre; but that did not extinguish their rights to the rest; nevertheless, because the centre was macadamised the landlords considered themselves entitled to enclose all the rest on both sides.

6030. I do not propose to take you fully into the question of inclosures but I will just ask you how these inclosures have affected the question of small holdings?—In the case of my two small tenants, it diminishes the number of cattle which they can keep.

6031. The collateral advantages which they had on the waste facilitated their business as small holders?—Very much so indeed, more than any large farmers would believe. It was everything to these small people; the smaller they were the more it was to them to have this chance of feeding on the waste.

6032. May I ask what remedy you propose for this extinction of rights in the waste?—I would make it a criminal offence to inclose a common or waste illegally, and I would punish the man with imprisonment without the option of a fine. If you did that people would think twice before they did it, and I think that we should have an end of it; it would not be necessary to enforce the law against them, the risk would be too great in such a case.

6033. To whom would you give the duty of watching over these rights?—To some smaller authority than the County Council. The County Council is too far off to take much interest in it; in fact, the landowner who has made this inclosure of which I am speaking, is himself a member of the County Council, and one of his duties as county councillor is to protect these very roadside wastes which he has himself inclosed. I would give that duty to some smaller local body who would be more immediately interested in it; and I would also enable any individual to put the law in force.

6034. Coming now to the indirect action of the Legislature, which has had, in your opinion, the same effect as the direct provisions to which you have referred, will you tell us in what that consists?—Indirectly in the statutes against perpetuities, which, while practically abolishing entails, permit settlements for a life and 21 years longer.

6035. The practical effect of these settlements, in your opinion, is, I suppose, to create perpetuities in land?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

6036. And to prevent the land coming into the market?—Yes.

6037. Has not Lord Cairns' Act materially affected the operation of these perpetuities?—No, it has not.

6038. Why not?—Lord Cairns' Act gives the life-tenant a legal power to sell the land, undoubtedly; but common experience surely shows that the motive for which a man sells anything is to get the purchase-money, and Lord Cairns' Act does nothing whatever to enable the life-tenant to sell and put the purchase-money in his pocket. If you take any other commodity, surely the reason that a man sells it is to get the purchase-money. In the case of settled land this does not exist; the life-tenant does not get the purchase-money; it goes into the settlement. At the most he can only get some increased interest upon it; or it may be applied to certain forms of land improvement; but the money itself he cannot touch.

6039. But in any case I suppose the money is not his?—It is not his; it does not belong to him.

6040. You would not propose that the life-owner should be made absolute owner, to the exclusion of all reversionary interests?—No, I would not; but there you get at the heart of the matter. As long as you have such a thing as a life-owner you cannot have that motive operating for bringing land into the market which brings every other commodity into the market, namely, the desire of getting the money; the two things are incompatible. No improvement in the form of the law assisting the life-owner to sell can be effectual; the only thing that can bring land into the market is to abolish the life-owner altogether, so that the same causes shall operate to bring land into the market as cause the owner of every other commodity to bring his commodity into the market, namely, the intention of the man to get the money and use it for his own purposes.

6041. If I understand you rightly, you would not allow any settlement, or any devolution by will, which constituted a reversionary interest in the land?—No, I would not.

6042. How do you suggest that a land-owner desiring to provide for his widow and family should deal with his land?—In the case of a minor, a child, I think we must make concession to natural human feeling, and allow a settlement until he comes of age. In the case of a widow I do not think I should allow a settlement. My impression is that widows are extremely bad landlords, or landladies, rather.

6043. But that is not quite an answer to my question; assuming a man to be animated by ordinary motives, and desiring to make reasonable provision for his widow and for three or four children, under existing circumstances he may, in the first place, create a life interest and pass it on to the others, and he may also mortgage the land; how do you propose that he should deal with his property; would you require him to leave the whole of the land to one member of the family, and to burden it with payments to the others?—No; taking the cases separately, in the case of children left minors, I would certainly

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Chairman—continued.

tainly allow the land to be in settlement until they came of age; I think we must make that concession; but in the case of providing for others, I should say that if he chooses to mortgage his land let him do so, but put mortgages on a level with a bill of sale; do not have the inducement of secrecy operating to the public disadvantage in leading people to charge their land; treat mortgages of land like mortgages of personal property, make them to be registered and exposed to public view; subject to that, I should not extinguish the power of mortgaging; but I would not permit the land to be the subject of a life estate; and, under those circumstances, I believe that what landowners would do would be to sell off parts of their estate in order to provide for their widows and young children, and they would be none the worse for it; they would have less land, they would have more money, and the public would gain by more land being brought into the market.

6044. And, in your opinion, one of the first objects of any one desiring to increase the number of small holdings would be to bring more land into the market for sale?—Yes; in my opinion the prohibition of settlements and life estates in land would do more than all other causes put together to bring land into the market in small and handy quantities. We know from common experience that people with property are from time to time in want of sums of ready money, it may be a large sum or a small sum; if land, then, were a subject of absolute ownership, people would sell outlying parts of their estate to provide a few hundred or thousand pounds, which they might want for setting up their children, for building, or for any other purpose. I believe that an immense quantity of land would be brought into the market in that way, and that that natural process would greatly increase the number of small owners and cultivators.

6045. I suppose that another argument in favour of such a change as you propose would be a diminution in the expense of the transfer of land?—Yes, certainly. The cost of the transfer of land arises not from anything in the nature of the land itself but from the incidents of settlement. Extinguish settlement and the cost of land transfer would disappear; until you extinguish settlement there will be very great difficulty in cheapening land transfer.

6046. And I suppose that cost is the most material obstacle in the way of the creation of small holdings?—A most material obstacle.

6047. Have you, in your own experience, any instances of the effect of settlement in interfering with the creation of small holdings?—I have. A near relative of my own, who is a large landowner in South Wales of settled land, recently determined to sell the outlying portions of his estate for small holdings. In coming to work the thing out it occurred to him, that for every purchase that was made there would have to be a solicitor employed by the purchaser; perhaps they might have 30 or 40 solicitors at work. Then the owner of the land thought that he would get over that by giving a free conveyance to every purchaser, and so diminishing the costs. It seems a monstrous thing that in a sale of land there should be 30 or 40 firms of solicitors

Chairman—continued.

employed. He was prepared to give a free conveyance to every purchaser, and to establish his title in some reasonable way to the satisfaction of them all together. He was advised that under Lord Cairns' Act he would not be entitled to pay for any such conveyance to any of these purchasers; that if he chose to provide them with such free conveyances he must do it entirely out of his own pocket.

6048. He could not charge the estate with it?—No, that is to say it could not come out of the purchase money that he received; the whole of the purchase money would have gone to the trustees of the settlement, and he would have had to pay every farthing involved in giving the people a free conveyance. That caused the whole thing to break down. Now that would have founded a large number of small holdings but for that difficulty.

6049. Could he not have got over that by reducing the purchase money?—He was in the hands of his lawyers. A settled owner must act through his solicitor, that is one of the incidents of settlement; a life-owner is in the hands of his lawyers who tell him that he cannot do this or that.

6050. The reforms which you have suggested are of course very large and drastic measures affecting the whole system of land tenure in the country; have you considered whether there is any special legislation by which, without reference to these larger and more general reforms, additional facilities might be given for the creation of small holdings?—I have. I think that such additional legislation would be necessary and valuable.

6051. Before coming to your proposal, may I ask you what is the great difficulty; is it the want of land suitable for the purpose?—It is very much the want of land suitable for the purpose. But I should like to say, before passing on to special legislation, that I do really think that the abolition of settlements is more important than anything else, and that to create public authorities with the power of making these small holdings, while you have nine-tenths of the land of this country tied up in settlement, is, if the Committee will excuse my saying so, like giving a vestry power to deal in mutton chops while all the loins of mutton in the country are the subject of life-estates.

6052. But I suppose that there is a great deal of land which you have compared to loins of mutton, which is passing into the market from time to time, and if in all such cases it were immediately converted into mutton chops, you would have done a great deal, would you not?—Yes.

6053. You would be substituting the local authority for the settled owners without the restrictions which at present weigh upon the estate?—Yes.

6054. In that way, although not by general legislation, you would be unsettling all the land of the country which was the object of such transaction?—Yes; all which was the object of such transaction; but I should say that a vast deal more would naturally come into the market merely by abolishing settlements than by any possible machinery of that kind. At the same

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Chairman—continued.

time I should say, Do this, and do not leave the other undone.

6055. I quite understand that your opinion is, that the chief reform which is required is a reform in the law of settlement?—It is. If you would allow me, I should like to illustrate this a little more.

6056. If you please?—I conceive the present state of land in England to be like a congested railway station on which the down-line is blocked, while the up-line trains are coming constantly into the station; that is to say, that land is bought up and put into settlement, and once there it stays there; whereas under natural causes you would have a flux both ways: you would have land being bought by wealthy people on the one hand, and at the same time you would have a certain number of landed people pressed for ready money, and so land coming day by day into the market. If it had not been for the system of settlement, I do not think that land would be blocked as it is; I think that natural causes would keep the flow backwards and forwards, and that the most important thing is to restore that natural flow. However, I quite concur that there should be special legislation too.

6057. Assuming that under existing political circumstances there would be very great difficulty in carrying through such drastic legislation as you have suggested, you would then suggest alternatives, which, although not in your opinion as important, would still materially facilitate the creation of small holdings?—I should; I should vote for them very cordially.

6058. Then I will ask you further, what is the obstacle which we have to remove. As I understand you, it is in the want of land available and suitable for the purposes of small holdings?—Yes; and, in addition, the difficulty of providing the whole of the purchase-money straight down.

6059. Dealing in the first place with the question of the supply of land, we are told, and see for ourselves, that every day almost there are large masses of land coming into the market; every newspaper is full of advertisements for the sale of land. Why is not that sufficient?—I should say that the land which we see offered for sale in the newspapers on the whole is not of a kind suitable for small holdings.

6060. In what way?—Very much of it is poor bad land which people must get rid of at any price, like those farms in Essex which you can get nothing for, and also it is land at a distance from towns and markets.

6061. Dealing first with the quality of the land, do you consider that only land of good quality is suitable for small holdings?—I think that there is some land with which you can do nothing, and that a small holder on it would have a bad time of it. At the same time, I think that an active small holder would do a very great deal in improving poor land. That is my experience. My own small tenants have got very poor cold clay land to deal with, and they are improving it. I grant, however, that there is some land on which I would not wish to plant a small holder.

6062. Is it not rather a question of the extent of the land; that is to say, that if it is of poor quality, a man must have more in order to make a living out of it than if it was of good quality?—Yes; but I should say that it would be better for him to have a little land of good quality, than a great deal of bad quality; he would have to spend a great deal of labour on his bad land.

6063. In talking of small holdings, you do not confine yourself, do you, to those small holdings which are specially suitable for a particular kind of culture, such as fruit culture and vegetable culture?—No, I do not. I think that the small holder can do in this country almost anything with his land. I cannot conceive of a social order more favourable to the existence of small holdings than that under which we live in England, with towns and markets scattered all over the country pretty nearly, and everything that land will grow being wanted in this country. Of course a small holder must be, to some extent, a man of enterprise; if his land will not suit one thing it is certain to suit something else for which there is a good market.

6064. I want to put it to you whether your answers go so far as this, that in order to successfully establish small holders throughout the country the small holders must be allowed to pick out the hearts of estates?—No, I do not say that at all. On the contrary, I can point to a very large number of small holders who have much worse land than the big farms and make more out of it. That is the case on my own land.

6065. I do not want your answer to be misunderstood, but in saying that the land which is now offered for sale is not suitable land for small holdings, you do not mean that only the best land will do for the purpose?—No, I do not.

6066. But average land you would consider suitable for small holdings everywhere?—I should.

6067. And you only desire to exclude the very worst land?—I desire to exclude the worst land, land you may say which is hopelessly wet or inaccessible, by which I do not mean mere distance from a railway, I think small holders would get over that; but that the roads and so on may be so bad as to render the land practically inaccessible.

6068. But does your answer really give a sufficient explanation; surely of the land which is being offered a good deal must come under your definition of being average land?—Yes; but is so much of it offered in small lots; I should say not.

6069. That is another thing which I wanted to bring out?—What I see in the papers usually is an estate of from 300 to say 3,000 acres. It is no help to a small holder to know that if he goes into the centre of Essex, or perhaps Perthshire, estates of thousands of acres are to be sold. The land must be offered in small and suitable quantities.

6070. Perhaps I may ask you whether this fairly represents your contention; that in order that there should be any considerable extension of small holders throughout the country, small holdings as such must be offered and obtainable in every neighbourhood?—Yes.

6071. It

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Chairman—continued.

6071. It is not enough, for instance, for a man who wishes to be a small holder in Essex to tell him that there is an estate to be let in small holdings in Perthshire?—No.

6072. Nor that there is a large estate to be let in Essex?—No.

6073. Holdings suitable in size and convenient to his residence must be obtainable?—Yes, it must be near him; little men in my experience will go into their own, county and counties adjoining to look for such land as they require for small holdings, but they will not go far into the country generally.

6074. Then another difficulty which I understand you to put forward is that a small holder is not generally in a condition to find the whole of the purchase money?—No.

6075. What is your objection to allowing him to find a portion and to borrow the rest?—I should not like him to borrow the rest from a money lender; I think that his position would be a bad one. I conceive that a little man buying his holding, say for 500 *l.*, if he put down 80 *l.* or 100 *l.* from his own means and borrowed 400 *l.* from the county lawyer (that is what it would come to) would probably have to pay greater costs to begin with for his loan; he would have to pay a much higher rate of interest I imagine than we should if we borrowed the money, and on the whole I think the debt would weigh very heavily upon him.

6076. We have dealt with the question of supply; now as to the demand for small holdings; do you think that if they were provided as suggested conveniently and of a suitable character, they would be taken up?—I know for certain that the demand to rent small holdings is exceedingly great at the present time, and I believe that the demand to purchase them would also be very great. The demand for renting small holdings is something quite astonishing. When I advertised one of my own small farms of 33 acres, in three days I had 23 people inquiring about it, of whom I should say pretty nearly all were *bonâ fide* people wanting to have a small holding. The demand for small holdings in convenient places and at moderate rents is almost illimitable I should say; and I believe that if facilities for purchase were given you would find at the present time a very large demand for them, and as the system took root a yearly increasing demand for them in this country.

6077. I want to point out to you that the large reforms which you have suggested in regard to settlement by bringing small plots of land into the market, might provide for one of your conditions, but it would not provide for the other conditions; it would not supply the purchase money or enable a holder to obtain these plots of land by the payment of instalments?—It would not.

6078. Some further action of the Legislature is necessary that his difficulties in those respects may be removed?—It is.

6079. What method do you propose for dealing with that?—For the purchase-money?

6080. Yes, generally, for dealing with the two objects which you have in view, namely, the provision of land and the provision of the purchase-money?—I should myself begin by greatly extending the Allotments Act. We have in the Allotments Act something that we can begin upon, something actually existing. In my opinion the limitation of an allotment to one acre is artificial and unreasonable; it is going against nature. If you could give elasticity to the allotment system, and enable the small man, as he put by a little money, to increase his holding, I believe that you would have taken the first step towards getting a class of small owners. At present let the agricultural labourer be as thrifty and self-denying as he can, it is almost beyond the borders of possibility for him to save from 50 *l.* to 100 *l.* I have known men who have saved something.

6081. With regard to the Allotments Act, it provides for the leasing of allotments not exceeding one acre by the local authority?—Yes.

6082. I understand that, in the first place, you would propose to remove the limit of area?—I should remove the limit of area. Whether you are to have any limit at all would of course be a question for the wisdom of the Legislature; but if there is to be a limit, I should put it very much higher than one acre; I should not put it under five acres; I think that five acres would be a very low limit, but I do not presume to say what the limit should be.

6083. I take it that in ordinary cases an allotment or holding of five acres is not enough to subsist a man and his family?—It is not enough to subsist a man and his family, but it will make a difference between his being able to save something and not being able to save anything.

6084. It would be an additional step?—Yes.

6085. Do you see any objection, if legislation took place, to increase it still further to 50 acres on the letting system?—I think you must bear in mind that the local authority does take some risk in the case of letting, because there is no security in the way of money laid down.

6086. Therefore, if I understand your view, it is this: that you might simply extend the limit of leasing up to five acres?—Yes.

6087. But that if you want to go beyond that you ought to provide some system of purchase by which the local authority should ultimately be relieved of all liability?—Yes, and shall from the beginning have some further security than the mere possession of the land there.

6088. Dealing now with the question of purchase, how would you provide for the purchase to be accomplished; supposing that you limit the powers of leasing to five acres, how would you deal with holdings above that amount?—My own opinion is that there should be a double form of public action; a local authority and a central authority. I conceive that the local authority would be the best for the purchase of land round small towns and villages, with a view of founding new small holdings; that, I think, the central authority could not do; it would not have sufficient knowledge to select land and cut it up into small holdings. The local authority, in my opinion, would have sufficient experience and knowledge of the district to be able to do that with a fair prospect of success. Therefore, for such establishment of new small

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Chairman—continued.

holdings I should prefer to put the local authority in operation. The State, in my opinion, might reasonably advance money to the local authority for the formation of small holdings at 2¾ or 3 per cent.; the local authority would have to take measures for getting rather more than that, of course, from the persons whom it placed on the land; and in the course of 40 years, or such time as you may fix, the local authority would repay this debt to the State.

6089. I confine myself, in the first instance, to the question of the local authority. In such a case as you have suggested, the local authority would acquire an estate?—Yes.

6090. It would then divide it into small holdings?—Yes.

6091. It would borrow the whole of the cost of purchase and any expenditure necessary for its division from the State at a low rate?—Yes.

6092. Then, I assume that it would offer it to the small holders, basing its charge upon say 1 per cent. extra?—I think 1 per cent. would be enough.

6093. Would you require that anything should be paid down?—I would certainly.

6094. You attach importance to that condition?—I do; I attach great importance to that.

6095. Have you considered that by attaching that condition to it you would exclude many labourers who, as you have stated, cannot with the utmost thrift save any money?—I have; that is the very reason why I have urged, as preliminary to this scheme, an extension of the Allotments Act. I want to extend the Allotments Act in order to give the people an opportunity, by means of the successful cultivation of an allotment, of the means of saving money, and thus in time being able to provide the very reasonable sum of money which they would have to lay down in the event of their desiring at some future period to become small holders under the local authority.

6096. Is it your idea that the impecunious labourer, the man who is not able to pay anything down, is not a fit subject for the holder of say 50 acres; that is to say a considerable small holding; but that he must seek his improvement in the first instance by a small allotment; that when he has saved money there he may go on to a big allotment, and that through the big allotment he may hope to save money enough to become in the end a small holder?—That is my view, and that is my experience, based on attempts which I have made on my own property and property under my management. I have made many such attempts.

6097. Is it your view then that the local authority would undertake too great a risk if it were to give to absolutely impecunious people these holdings on the terms of the Ashbourne Act; namely, that the whole of the holding was to be paid for by instalments?—That is my opinion; I would insist on some instalment down.

6098. And in so insisting, do you imagine that you would limit the demand so greatly as to seriously interfere with the success of the scheme?—No, not to such an extent as that; you would no doubt limit the demand; but I am not prepared to say that that might not be an advantage in starting. I think it quite possible that a system may be more solid and operative in the long run if we have it working by degrees rather than starting with a great rush.

Chairman—continued.

6099. You would always, you think, have a sufficient number of applicants on starting a scheme of this kind, who would be able to pay a certain portion of the money down?—I think so.

6100. And you would be hopeful that under the other proposals which you have made, the labourers, even the most impecunious of them, if they were thrifty and industrious, would gradually be able to climb the ladder into a small holding?—I think the best of the labouring class would. There are men who would never rise, who must remain at the bottom; the State cannot artificially alter the condition of these men; the most that the Legislature can do is, I think, to facilitate the chance of a man becoming something better if he himself possesses character and intelligence.

6101. In any case in which the local authority undertook this responsibility they would have to sift the applications, would they not?—Yes, they would in my opinion.

6102. If they were to grant wholesale to everybody who applied, they would almost certainly bring the scheme to grief?—Yes, they would both incur a loss and get unfit people on the holdings, and so discredit the whole thing.

6103. And those unfit people would damage the holdings?—I think they would exhaust the land; they would grow onions or something of the sort, and one day they would cut and run and nothing more would be heard of them.

6104. Then the condition that you would insist upon, a payment down, would be a self-acting sifting, would it not?—Yes.

6105. Because no one would, under those circumstances, offer himself who had not, or could not in some way by thrift acquire a little money?—Yes.

6106. That would be a guarantee of some sort of his efficiency?—I think it would be the most effective guarantee that one can devise in such a matter.

6107. What proportion do you think that the holder ought to pay down?—I think a fifth is enough, 20 per cent.

6108. Having paid one-fifth down, how would you propose that he should pay for the rest?—He should pay in the form of a quit-rent. How long that quit-rent shall go on is of course a matter to be settled. I should make them pay in the form of a quit-rent, and on the whole I think it would be better that some part of that quit-rent, I do not say all, should be permanent, as giving the local authority a hold on the man.

6109. According to your proposal, four-fifths would remain unpaid?—Yes.

6110. Would you consider it desirable that the holder should always owe that four-fifths, with a perpetual quit-rent representing the interest on it?—Not necessarily the whole four-fifths; but I think it expedient that some part of it should remain a permanent quit-rent.

6111. You think that if the whole four-fifths should remain that would be too much?—I think it would be better that the local authority should get part of the capital back.

6112. Is that because four-fifths would be too near

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Chairman—continued.

near the rack-rent?—It would be too near the rack-rent.

6113. Have you considered the possibility that if there were a perpetual quit-rent it would in course of time have the appearance of a special tax; that the origin of the quit-rent would be lost sight of, and future holders might resent the imposition of it as a special tax upon their industry?—I do not wish to say anything disrespectful to any suggestion, but I should myself say that that was moonshine.

6114. I will give you an illustration of that; it is the case of tithes?—Yes.

6115. Of course you are aware that the tithes are a burden upon the land, and that a man who has bought his farm subject to tithe has not paid for the tithes nor bought the tithes, but only bought what remains after the tithe is paid?—Yes.

6116. Still you are aware that the agitation against the payment of tithe has largely taken the form of an agitation against a tax on a particular industry?—I hesitate to enter upon the tithe question.

6117. I do not want to argue the principle of the question, but I am only giving it as an illustration in order to have your view?—In my opinion it is not a real analogy.

6118. Why not; would you inform me in what way a perpetual quit-rent would be distinguished from a perpetual tithe charge?—I think that even without any great historical knowledge the holder of the land would at least know that it is only through the local authority that he is there in possession of the land at all, and that therefore he may reasonably pay them the quit-rent. If the clergyman could come to the little yeoman and say, "It is only through the Established Church that you are here at all," I believe that the man would gladly pay him his tithe many times over.

6119. Then you do not see any objection to perpetuating the quit-rent provided that the quit-rent is not unreasonable?—I see no objection at all to that; I never heard of anybody objecting to the land-tax to the State; and in this case there would be still less objection to paying this rent to the community through whom you exist as a landowner.

6120. I understand you to think that four-fifths is too large a proportion, but supposing four-fifths to be established as the proportion, and supposing that the value of the land fell so that what is now four-fifths became in course of time the full rack-rent of the rental, do you think that that would be objectionable?—Yes; I think for that reason it would be better to diminish it, to bring it down considerably below four-fifths, and only to leave so much as should enable the local authority to enforce certain conditions, if necessary, on the holder.

6121. Have you formed any estimate of what proportion you would think might remain as a perpetual quit-rent?—First of all, he pays off his fifth; then, by a system of instalments, he gradually repays all or most of the advance; after that I should say that two-fifths would be quite enough to remain as a perpetual quit-rent.

6122. Then, supposing that two-fifths remained as a perpetual quit-rent, may I take it that your advocacy of that is based, in the first place, upon the control that would be given to the local authority as to any conditions which they might think it necessary to enforce upon the holder?—Yes.

6123. That is to say, supposing the local authority found it necessary to make conditions as to cultivation, against sub-division and against charging, or any conditions of that kind, they would be better able to enforce them if they had this perpetual quit-rent?—I think so. Legally of course they could have a covenant apart from a quit-rent; but as a matter of fact that would be forgotten. The quit-rent would be useful as keeping up the connection.

6124. It would be a continual reminder?—A continual reminder.

6125. Would there not be another advantage in the fact that this perpetual quit-rent when the instalments had been paid would be a perpetual revenue acquired by the local authority, and a profit on the beneficial transaction which it had been carrying on for the benefit of the small holder?—That would be a very great advantage to the local authority.

6126. I mean to say that it would to some extent justify them with the other ratepayers, inasmuch as they would be able to say, "In carrying out this great public work we have also had your interest in view, and have obtained this profit for you"?—Certainly.

6127. Now as to the buildings; upon whom do you propose to throw the responsibility of providing buildings?—On the holder distinctly, not on the local authority.

6128. You have no idea that the local authority should undertake that responsibility?—Certainly not.

6129. Why not?—I think that the local authority would not put up necessarily the right kind of buildings; I think they would pay more for buildings than it was necessary to pay, and also they could not do it bit by bit. I attach great importance in this and everything else to doing things in a natural way, little by little, in accordance with the demand of the moment. I believe that no buildings can be more suitable than those which the small holder will put up for himself according as he can afford it, and as he feels the need at the time.

6130. There would, of course, be a collateral advantage in that the security of the local authority would be increased?—Yes, the security of the local authority would be increased, and the expense, of course, enormously diminished. I do not think I could support a plan for the local authority going to the expense of putting up buildings. The expense would be so great to my mind that it would ruin the whole thing.

6131. Does that apply also to the lending of money by the local authority for the erection of buildings or other improvements?—The lending of money for improvements is rather a different question. The money I suppose might be lent up to a certain limit on the additional security which would be given by the buildings; I should not like to lend much for that purpose.

6132. Supposing that no power were given to lend money, do you suppose that the obligation upon the tenant to find in the first place one-fifth of the purchase money, and in the next

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Chairman—continued.

place all the money which would be required from time to time for buildings, would be an insuperable obstacle?—No, I do not think it would to the good men, the sort of men we want to put on the small holdings; it would be an obstacle to lazy people, and to people who had not any heart in it; and such an obstacle might be a very good thing.

6133. I suppose your view is that the thrifty and industrious man, whom by hypothesis you suppose to be the holder, would have a little capital in addition to the one-fifth that he would pay down?—Yes.

6134. And that he would be able very cheaply, partly by his own labour, to put up the buildings that were absolutely necessary?—Yes, that is my view.

6135. And that as he succeeded he would from time to time increase and improve them?—He would from time to time. He might not necessarily even live on his land to begin with; he might live a little way off. Why should the local authority build him a cottage when he can rent one a few hundred yards off. Then if he can build one at any time with his hands, so much the better.

6136. And the obligation to provide buildings would be a further guarantee both as to his character and for the repayment of his obligations?—It would.

6137. Now you have said that this proposal of allotment and small holding together would form a continuous line?—Yes.

6138. In your own experience have you any illustrations to give of cases where labourers have risen from being allotment holders to become small holders?—Yes; University College has been engaged in the creation and development of allotments and small holdings for many years past; long before the public took up this matter we were working at it; we established allotments where they did not exist, and greatly increased them and small holdings where they did already exist.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

6139. May I ask in what counties University College has land?—In 12 counties. Where we have allotments and small holdings is now at Towcester, in Northamptonshire; near Astwood Bank, in Worcestershire; and at Linton-on-Ouse, in Yorkshire, where we have them on a very large scale.

Chairman.

6140. Will you deal first with the Towcester allotments?—We got 33 acres from the farmers there. I do not know whether I may pause to say how extraordinarily difficult it is to get land from farmers for these small holdings and allotments. The original number of holders was 26; that was about an average of one and a quarter acres to each holding. By a perfectly natural process the weaker thriftless men have disappeared (and they ought to be allowed to disappear). The number has been reduced to 13, and as the weak men disappeared the better men have taken up their land. One man who began with a very little bit now holds nine acres, paying a rent of 18 *l.* a year for it. Another man who began with a little bit now holds five acres and pays 10 *l.* a year. The average size of holding has increased from one and a quarter to two and a half acres, and I am quite certain that it would increase to five acres if we could get the land out of the hands of the farmers for the purpose.

Chairman—continued.

6141. Then here, by perfectly natural causes, the allotment holder has risen to be a small holder?—Yes.

6142. And probably if opportunity were afforded to the small holder he would rise to be a large holder?—I believe the process would be continuous.

6143. Will you now refer to the Linton-on-Ouse case?—In Linton we had at first 90 acres, divided among 36 holders. There has been great demand for more, and we have recently added 30 acres more. There has been no single case of any man ever giving up any land at Linton, and the demand is very strong for more land, but we cannot get it from the farmers.

6144. But by the addition that you have made the average size of allotment has been increased?—Increased by about a third. I am going down there this summer to try and get a little bit more land, because the demand is so great among these people.

6145. You say that you cannot get the land from the farmers?—Yes.

6146. You are the landlord there, the College?—Yes.

6147. How do you mean that you cannot get the land from the farmers; are they under lease?—No, at Linton they are not under lease; they will not take leases; they prefer to be annual tenants. They and their fathers have lived there for hundreds of years, and any such thing as the disturbance or eviction of tenants is unknown; they look upon themselves as perpetual tenants under us; we are on exceedingly good terms with them, and although we have legal power to take away the land from the farmers, it would be an exceedingly disagreeable thing to do. And going on the principle of slow and steady, I prefer to do the thing by negotiation, and get a little bit of land by coaxing it out of them.

6148. When you said it was impossible to get the land from the farmers, you did not mean that it was legally impossible, but practically impossible?—Quite so; we could give a man notice to quit, and take his land of course, but that is a sort of thing one does not do.

6149. Going back for a moment to the proposals that you have laid before the Committee, they involve the purchase of land by the local authority for these purposes?—Yes.

6150. Do you propose to give the local authority compulsory power?—I should myself.

6151. Will you explain why?—My experience is two-fold; that in the first place there are some landlords who will not part with their land; and secondly, that there are many landlords who would be willing to part with their land, but who under present circumstances cannot get it from the farmers. It is a serious thing for a landlord at the present time to quarrel with a considerable tenant, a tenant holding 300 acres of land say, by asking him to give up 30 or 40 acres

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Chairman—continued.

acres when the man will say that he will not do so, and that he will rather go away.

6152. Whereas if the landlord said to the farmer, if I do not do this voluntarily the local authority could compel me, you think that that would be effectual?—I do not think that the compulsory powers would need to be put in force to a great extent; I think both landlords and farmers would to a great extent anticipate the compulsory powers as we have seen them do in the case of allotments.

6153. In connection with that, have you any experience in the working of the Allotments Act of 1887?—I have not much experience of the working of that Act, but no doubt indirectly it has had a great effect.

6154. I was going to ask you whether you know that the compulsory powers have been put in force under that Act?—Very little I should think; I do not know of any instance personally.

6155. But although they may not have been put in force, you are of opinion that their existence has been a very great advantage and has facilitated the provision of these allotments?—From what I hear and see all over the country I should say that the Act has had a very great indirect effect in that way.

6156. And you are anxious, therefore, that compulsory powers should be given in this case, not so much because you think they would necessarily be put in force, but because of their indirect effect?—Yes. I should wish to see them put in force too, but I think that the indirect effect of them would be very salutary.

6157. And in your opinion there are many landlords who would welcome compulsory powers?—Yes, I believe there are landlords who are very anxious to increase these small holdings, but who cannot do it on account of the farmers. I should say, myself, that the opposition to giving the labourer a lift comes much more from the farmer than from the landlord; that is my opinion at the present time. At the same time I do know cases of landlords who will not part with any land at all, or allow any houses to be erected. In my own county, in Sussex, there is an owner of 15,000 acres, which is, roughly speaking, 20 square miles, who will not part with any of the land at all, or allow any houses to be erected on it. That land might just as well be in Central Africa for any connection it has with England. That means absolute stagnation over an area of 20 square miles.

6158. In such cases as those you think that compulsory powers might very properly be resorted to?—I think it is perfectly monstrous that a tract like that, of the size of London, should be so absolutely in the power of one man that he can prohibit anybody from having an inch of it, or erecting a house on it.

6159. Now, your scheme contemplates, as you have told us, that, beyond five acres, the creation of small holdings should be the creation of ownerships, or *quasi* ownerships?—Yes.

6160. We have been told by some witnesses that there is no demand for ownership, and that the class who desire to be put upon the land would prefer leases, and the reason given has been that they would object to any restrictions upon sub-division or the disposal of the land; that they would not regard themselves as owners, they would resent the restrictions, and at the same time they would prefer the comparative independence of leasing; what would you say with regard to that?—There are, no doubt, advantages on the two sides, but in my opinion the balance of advantage inclines to the side of the holder under the local authority as against the lessee under a landlord; I believe that a little man would, on the whole, prefer to be an independent holder under the local authority to having a lease even from a good landlord. I quite admit that there is something in it, but I consider that the security for keeping all his own improvements, the feeling that practically the land is there for him to do what he chooses with it, in the way of improving it, and getting what he can out of it, would be a great inducement to a man to take land on such terms.

6161. And I might ask you whether you do not think also, that inasmuch as one object of the creation of small holdings is to fix the cultivator to the land, that object would be more surely obtained by making him owner than by making him tenant, with power to go away whenever he was temporarily discouraged?—Yes. Moreover, there is this to be taken into account: that under this system the transfer of land must be made absolutely simple; it must be simply a matter of entry; in that case it would be easier, I should imagine, for a holder to go about his business, than if he has a lease under a landlord. The difficulties in the transfer of land come at present so much from the cost attaching to it, that if once you get these people in possession of land which they can sell merely by an entry being made in the clerk's book, I expect that there would be no great difficulty in a man who wanted to go elsewhere getting some one else to take his land; there would be no difficulties of transfer.

6162. It would be essential, as I understand, to your scheme that they should be owners, otherwise they would not be able to provide the buildings, unless they could claim compensation?—No, I do not like the system of compensation, in such a case as this, by the local authority; I think it would be much better that the buildings should be the man's own. Might I go rather further into the question of buildings, which I conceive to be an exceedingly important one in this matter.

6163. If you please?—I do not think practically that we can solve the small holdings difficulty, that is, the creation of them, by merely expecting that landlords will let enough small holdings. The difficulty of buildings comes in there. Landlords cannot afford to erect buildings for new small holdings. It is said, I know, "Cannot you trust to landlords letting the land in small holdings, and people taking it in a natural way?" I should say one answer to that is, that to provide buildings for the small holder is so expensive a matter for the landlord that practically there are very few cases in which you can have a new small holding made.

6164. But could not the landlord do exactly what you have suggested that the local authority should do, namely, sell his land for small holdings with a perpetual-quit rent, and leave it to the

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Chairman—continued.

tenant to provide the buildings?—Land under settlement could not, I believe, be so sold; it would be illegal. I take the thing to be this: The little man, the small holder, will erect the buildings necessary to him, and for from half to a quarter of the cost which it costs the landlord to put them up. That is really everything in the matter. Supposing that a landlord is going to establish small holdings of from 20 to 30 acres on land which has not buildings suitable to them, he must spend 300*l.* or 400*l.* on each in doing that; then he must charge a reasonable rate of interest on that. Add that to the value of the land; that makes a rent at which the little man can hardly live. To my mind you cannot have any very great extension of small holdings by landlords, even if they had all the will in the world to do it, on account of this difficulty of buildings. The kind of buildings that a landlord puts up is different from the sort of little shanty that the small holder would put up for himself. It is a very good thing that there should be such a difference in the standard of solidity and comfort and sanitary arrangements, and so on, in the case of buildings erected by the landlords. I do not wish to see them put up corrugated iron buildings and things that would tumble down in ten years. As a matter of fact the landlords will not do it. The landlords of England do put up good substantial buildings (and it is a good thing that they do), but they are expensive; and that would stand in the way of their being able to make any small holdings to any great extent by themselves.

6165. You have suggested that, in cases near villages and near towns, the local authorities should be called in to purchase and subdivide estates for the purpose of creating small holdings?—Yes.

6166. But you have also referred to a central authority; do you mean some department of the Government?—Yes.

6167. What function do you attribute to them?—My own opinion is (I give it only as my opinion) that a central authority would be more convenient in cases of the purchase of holdings by existing tenants. It happens sometimes, we know it has happened, that a landlord has offered his land for sale, and the tenant would be willing to purchase it, and glad to purchase it. I think that in such a case there may be some difficulty in the tenant going to the local authority, who are his neighbours, and asking them to assist him in purchasing this tenancy for himself; difficulties might arise to my mind in that case, and on the whole I think it would be better in that case that the tenant should apply to a central authority to assist him in doing that.

6168. What is to be the action of the central authority in such a case?—I should say, let its action be very much the same as that which I have described; the purchaser to pay down his 20 per cent., the State to advance the rest of the money for the purchase, and to be repaid by a quit-rent extending over whatever number of years you may fix.

6169. That would be in effect, would it not, an application of the Ashbourne Act to England?—Yes.

6170. And in your view that would be a

Chairman—continued.

satisfactory provision for isolated cases?—Yes, I think so. I think that a man applying to the local authority to help him to purchase his own holding would be put in an invidious position, if I may say so; and there is also the question of delay.

6171. In the case of the central authority, would you follow the precedent of the Ashbourne Act, and enable that man to become absolute owner, or would you still provide for a quit-rent?—That is an open question; I think that one of the reasons for which we desire to keep up the perpetual quit-rent in the case of land purchased by the local authority, namely, as helping the local authority to keep some hold on the man, would not exist in the same way in the case of land purchased through the central authority. I do not think that the central authority could look after a man in the same way as the local authority would, to prohibit sub-division and sub-letting; I do not think that a central office in London could know enough about the matter or employ a sufficient number of people to know whether the man was sub-dividing his land or sub-letting it; and so far as that goes one of the reasons for maintaining the perpetual quit-rent disappears.

6172. I should like you to follow out the proposal you have made, and to tell us what the financial incidence would be; would the holder under your system have to pay more than the rent which would be payable by his neighbours?—That all depends on the purchase money; of course, land could be purchased so recklessly or extravagantly that the annual payment of the holder should come to much more than the rent; but, on the other side, I think that by judicious selection and waiting, land could be purchased on which the annual payment by the holder should be very little more than the existing rent; I do not say that you could make it less as a rule, but I think you might make it very little more.

6173. Would you follow that out with an instance?—Take the case of land of the fair value of 1,000*l.* (I take a round sum for convenience): we buy land costing that; the rent of such land at present, taking the value of land at 30 years' purchase, would be about 33*l.* a year, paid by the tenant to an ordinary landlord, assuming 1,000*l.* to be about the fair value of the land. The local authority borrowing 1,000*l.* from the State would get it say, at 2¾ or 2 7-8ths per cent.

6174. At 3 per cent.?—Could they not get it at less than 3 per cent.?

6174*. No?—Then we must add 1 per cent. to that; that brings the rent up to 40*l.* a year. It is the difference between 33*l.* and 40*l.* a year.

6175. That is to say, that the small holder would have to pay at the rate of 7*l.* a year per 1,000*l.* more than the small tenant who was holding under an individual landlord?—Yes; but I do not know that that need necessarily go on for ever and ever.

6176. No; but under your proposal he would only do that for a term of years; after that his rent would be reduced to 2-5ths of the total rent?—Yes.

6177. He

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Chairman—continued.

6177. He would ultimately become absolute owner, subject to a perpetual quit-rent of 2-5ths?—Yes, or ultimately even less than that; he would have paid up the capital in the meantime.

6178. Just to follow up your illustration his position would be this: he would have paid in the first instance 1-5th down, 200 *l.*?—Yes.

6179. That would leave 800 *l.* on mortgage to the local authority?—Yes.

6180. For that 800 *l.* he would have to pay 32 *l.*?—Yes.

6181. He would have to pay that 32 *l.* for 40 years?—Yes.

6182. And at the end of that time he would have to pay 16 *l.* in perpetuity?—Yes; at the end of that time the local authority would have been paid off, the State would have been paid off, and anything the local authority gets then is clearly so much to the good; it might very well be reduced to 16 *l.*

6183. So that he would be in this position: that although he would be worse off by 7 *l.* a year for 40 years, at the end of that time he would be better off to the extent of 17 *l.* a year?—Yes.

6184. Instead of paying 33 *l.*, as he would by your assumption to the landlord, he would only be paying 16 *l.* as a perpetual quit-rent to the local authority?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

6185. And be owner instead of tenant?—Yes; it is only fair to point out on the other side that he would not be getting help from the landlord in buildings all this time. The man paying 33 *l.* to the landlord gets help from the landlord with regard to buildings in the way of repairs, materials, and so on.

Chairman.

6186. That calculation is based on the assumption that land is to be purchased at 30 years'?—Yes.

6187. Is that a fair estimate?—Thirty years is usually taken as the price for land; but my experience is that by looking about and taking chances you can get land at a good deal less, and very good suitable land. I lately purchased for University College a farm of 28 acres for 500 *l.*, the rent of which was 30 *l.* a year.

6188. That is rather an exceptional case, is it not?—That was an exceptional case; it was very cheap.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

6189. In what county was that?—In Essex. This is exactly a case where the tenant ought to have purchased. There was no reason why we purchased; it was simply as a good investment. I knew the farm was to be sold, made an offer for it and it was accepted; but the tenant in that case was really the right person to purchase and was very anxious to purchase; it was exactly a case in which had he gone to some central authority as proposed, it would have been a very lucrative transaction to everybody concerned in it.

Chairman.

6190. In making this comparison between the position of a tenant and the position of a small holder under your proposal, you have to take into account the question of buildings?—Yes.

6191. Because if he were a tenant he would have to pay the landlord interest on the landlord's expenditure?—Yes.

6192. And you have already pointed out that the landlord would feel bound to spend more than the tenant would do?—Yes, much more.

6193. And the difference between the interest on what would have been the landlord's expenditure, and the interest which may be charged on what would be the tenant's or holder's expenditure, would be very considerable?—Yes; take the case of a holding, which we say is worth 1,000 *l.*, that is assuming the buildings are on it; but eliminate the buildings, assume them to be not there, and that at once brings down the purchase-money to 600 *l.* or thereabouts. On a farm worth 1,000 *l.* the buildings would certainly represent not less than from 300 *l.* to 400 *l.* So that if the local authority buys the land alone, what in that case it would pay would be 600 *l.*; that is to say, 600 *l.* is the figure we ought to start with instead of 1,000 *l.*

6194. To which would have to be added whatever was the value on the part of the tenant in providing the buildings?—Yes.

6195. Have you come across Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill for providing small holdings?—Yes, I have looked at it each time it has been brought into the House of Commons.

6196. We have had that Bill explained to us, and I take it that the proposals which you have made are very similar to those contained in the Bill?—They are very similar, yet there are differences.

6197. If I remember rightly, the principal differences are, in the first place, that you would reduce the perpetual quit-rent to two-fifths, whereas, I think Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill proposes that it shall permanently remain at three-fourths?—Yes.

6198. Then you propose (which is a supplement to the provisions in the Bill) that the Allotments Act should be extended so as to apply to five acres?—Yes.

6199. I do not know whether there are any other important distinctions?—I also think that you should have a central authority.

6200. Yes, you would also supplement the provisions of the Bill by allowing a central authority under similar provisions to those in the Ashbourne Act to lend money for the purchase of isolated tenancies?—Yes.

6201. And then another distinction between the Bill in its present form and your proposal is, that you attach considerable importance to the local authority having compulsory powers of purchase?—I should be glad to see compulsory powers of purchase.

6202. I have taken you through your evidence, and I need only ask you generally, whether in your opinion the creation of these small holdings is a matter of national importance?—In my opinion it is. I desire to invite the attention of the Committee to the conclusion drawn by Dr. Ogle who, besides being census officer, is a medical man well up in the matter, having the entire figures and everything else at his command.

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Chairman—continued.

After going most minutely into the question of the rural population, he reaches this conclusion: "That the best of the rural people are constantly going up into the towns;" "that the entire population of England and Wales is undergoing progressive deterioration;" "that the result of the migration into the towns is the gradual deterioration of the whole, and a system that leads to the survival of the unfittest." If that is the case, it is about as serious a thing as any conclusion that you can possibly draw from the census. If the entire population of England and Wales, the country as well as towns, is undergoing this deterioration, surely it is in the interests of the community to do what it can to stop it, if we can ascertain the causes. I contend that among many causes some are clearly ascertained; namely, the absence of facilities for rising from the position of an agricultural labourer to that of a small holder, and generally the effect of legislation, combined with natural causes, to make this migration from the country into the towns; we suggest a system which we believe will check this to some extent; and surely if ever a case of public intervention was justifiable in the interest of the community at large, it would be in such a case as this.

6203. You have had very considerable experience of small holdings in connection with your management of the University College estates?—I have.

6204. And I think your conclusion is extremely favourable to this class of the population?—Extremely favourable.

6205. Do you find them to be thrifty and industrious?—I do.

6206. And I think your experience has also been that in these small holdings the agricultural depression has been better met than in the larger farms?—I should say so. We have lost more on one large farm than on all our small holdings put together.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

6207. There is very little left to ask you, I am sure. With regard to the small holdings of University College, have the occupants of these holdings any other occupations?—Yes, many of them have; they do all sorts of things. And when you get a class of people like those you will find new occupations constantly springing up amongst them. One has started a machine with great advantage to himself and the other people; he hires it out. The majority of them, a considerable proportion of them, do something or other in addition to looking after their holdings.

6208. You do not actually assert that the holdings themselves would entirely support them without other occupations?—I think I could tell you which of the holdings support them entirely, and in which they are assisted by other occupations. But it is more than the question of support; these people put by money; they live, one may say, very comfortably. I know every soul of them; I go into their larders, and know in a very close way how they live. I should say that they live very comfortably, and that most of them have money.

6209. And this system of small holdings under

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

University College has been tested for some time?—Yes, it has.

6210. You spoke of having yourself started labourers upon the small holdings on your own property; has your experience been satisfactory?—Yes, it has been very satisfactory. My own property is a very small one, and hitherto I have only been able to start two small holders. One was a man a little removed above a labourer; I have given him 20 acres of land, and he is doing extremely well, but he labours still; he is not above doing a day's work when he can get a job (and you do not want them to leave off labour); he goes out haying or cleaning ponds. There is no reason why a man should not make a few shillings by going out labouring, and this man does.

6211. I want to ask you a question with regard to that roadside pasture; what is the right of pasture which you consider has been extinguished?—I can prove that for 30 years past one of these two small tenants of mine turned out any number of cows, and the other turned out two cows; and by law that is all that is required to prove a prescriptive right. If I can prove that for 30 years my people have had pasturage on it, I have as good a right to that pasturage as to the coat on my back. The waste has all been inclosed by the neighbouring landlord, and unless I knock down his fence and go to law with him I have nothing to do but to submit to it.

6212. Then it was usage which constituted the right?—I believe that the land is waste of the manor, but you can only prove that it is waste of the manor by proving the prescriptive right by usage. Nobody knows now exactly what the land was, whether it was waste of the manor. The old lord of the manor, Sir Walter Burrell, would have known, but he is dead and gone, and nobody knows now exactly.

6213. Was that a matter of custom in that particular part of the country, or was it a common practice?—I should say that it was very common with these lands; of course, land may be waste of the manor, or it may be merely waste land with prescriptive rights over it, apart from manorial rights.

6214. When the ratepayers macadamised the road, do you consider that the right to roadside pasture was in anyway modified?—The macadamising of the road would certainly not modify the rights to the roadside pasture.

6215. As I understand you, a space was left because the road was so bad that you might want to drive over one part at one time and another part at another time?—Yes.

6216. And when the road was properly made had your tenants as much right to the waste land as ever?—Yes; of course there are two quite distinct things; there are highway rights and the rights of feeding; the fact of this being a highway would not make any difference to there being rights of feeding; they did not have the rights of feeding because it was a highway; they would have the rights of feeding either because the land was waste of the manor or from 30 years prescription, apart from its being a highway.

6217. The ratepayers might have macadamised the whole space?—Yes, if they chose.

6218. I take

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Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

6218. I take it that your suggestion that the central authority should deal with what we may call present or sitting tenants is not a vital one, is it; I mean, as to leaving it in the hands of the local authority?—No, I should say not vital.

6219. You think it is more convenient?—Yes. I do not presume to say that my opinion on this is worth more than that of anybody else; I have not put the matter as vital; I should say more convenient.

6220. Take the case you have named, of a small tenant whose farm was sold; I think you said that you thought it would be well if he could have bought it. I think you said it was sold at 500 *l.*?—Yes.

6221. Do you know what his rent was?—His rent was 30 *l.*; it was a high rent; it was too large a rent; but buying at 500 *l.* you can reduce the rent ever so much.

6222. Supposing that he could have gone to the local authority to buy his farm, could he, although he was unable to raise the 500 *l.*, have been able to raise the one-fifth you speak of, 100 *l.*?—I have very little doubt that he would have done that.

6223. That would have left 400 *l.* to be advanced by the local authority?—Yes.

6224. That together, reckoning 4 per cent. on his 100 *l.* and the money advanced by the local authority, would make his yearly interest 20 *l.* instead of 30 *l.*?—Yes.

6225. And in addition, supposing that he ultimately paid off three-fifths, it would be considerably less?—Yes.

6226. At any rate, reckoning it at 4 per cent., no matter what he paid off, and what he borrowed, he would be standing at 20 *l.* instead of 30 *l.*?—Yes; still I should not like to say that land is generally to be bought at that price; it was no doubt a very good bargain.

6227. I am speaking only of that case?—In that case the tenant becoming holder would have been immensely advantaged.

6228. And if the local authority could have bought it the result of the whole calculation, if the man had paid off three-fifths, would have been that the local authority would have been in receipt of 8 *l.* a year perpetual quit-rent?—Yes.

6229. And the man himself would have been benefited by the transaction?—Certainly.

6230. Then you consider that the local authority would have gained that through the loan of its credit as it were, enabling it to borrow money cheaper than the man himself could borrow it?—Exactly; it is a question of credit.

6231. Do you think that as a matter of practice a scheme of this sort would recommend itself to the ratepayers as being likely to secure them from loss to begin with, and to be ultimately a source of income to the local authority?—I think that the ratepayers would take some time to understand it; but to my mind it is no disadvantage if a thing comes about gradually. One neighbourhood would do it and another afterwards. We might not have transactions very great all over the country. Let us do it brick by brick as you build a wall. Why should not this matter be done in the same way.

6232. But when they did understand it they would see that the risk or loss to the ratepayers was reduced to a minimum?—I think that they would come in time to understand it.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

6233. You said that you preferred compulsory powers of purchase in any legislation?—Yes

6234. And assuming them to be necessary, do you consider that a measure without those powers would be of use?—Decidedly of use; but I should like to see compulsion.

6235. You think that it would be improved by compulsory powers?—Yes; but I should vote for the measure even without compulsory powers.

6236. From your evidence we gather that if the land was purchased at 30 years' purchase, a tenant would be paying something more for becoming owner per annum; but that if it were purchased at 25 years' purchase, he would still pay about the same in your calculation?—Yes, that is supposing you reckon buildings as paid for; but leaving out buildings it might alter the figure.

6237. But according to your evidence anything below 25 years' purchase would be to his advantage; the yearly payments would be less?—Yes.

6238. I did not quite understand when you advocated the extension of the Allotments Act to five acres, whether you advocated the leasing section of the Allotments Act or the simple yearly letting; you made use of the word "leasing"?—I meant "letting." I do not want to alter the stipulations and conditions of the Allotments Act; I would leave it to the local authority and the tenant to settle as they please between yearly letting and leasing.

6239. Would there not be a difficulty with regard to the buildings in the case of a yearly letting, or even with a letting on leasehold, say, of five acres of land?—Yes, there would be the difficulty of compensation.

6240. That difficulty would not exist in the case of a purchase?—No.

6241. What advantage do you consider accrues to the owner in being allowed to pay off the extra sum you named, supposing the quit-rent is at a low rate of interest, say 4 per cent.?—I should say that it is an inducement to thrift; it is a good thing that a man should have the motive of wanting to pay off something to make him work hard; he would feel a legitimate satisfaction when he paid off 40 *l.* or 50 *l.* of his debt; he would feel a pride in having done so.

6242. Would you compel him to forego the use of any surplus money in manure and other things for the better cultivation of his land; seeing that this quit-rent could never be raised upon him, would you compel him to pay off this three-fifths?—I think it would be better that he should do so in order to guard the local authority from any possible loss from a fall in the value of the land afterwards, although of course at the end of 40 years or so there could be no such loss.

6243. With regard to legislation of this kind not being able to be taken advantage of except by only a certain number of the local population, do you consider that it would be a prospect if it were held out to the labourers for their future career?—I do very much; I think it would have a great effect.

6244. In other words, do you think that it would change the whole condition of the agri-

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

cultural labourer in his start in life as soon as he became 20 or 21 years of age, and could understand what was before him; do you think it would alter his own views of the agricultural industry and his own possibilities on the land?—Yes; I think you would make the man a hopeful man, instead of an almost hopeless man.

6245. In that respect it would amount to a social revolution as regards the agricultural labourer, as he is at present situated?—It would make a very great change.

6246. You spoke of the larger estates; is it your experience that the small holdings pay more rent per acre as a rule than the larger estates?—Yes, I think so; I should say that they did.

6247. Do you think that if the local authority were to buy the estate you referred to of 300 acres, and divide it into small holdings the extra rent from its being divided into small holdings would afford a still larger margin against loss?—Yes, I think so.

6248. Or in other words, let me put it in this way, that they would be able to let the land as small holdings at a lower rent than is the average at the present time?—Yes, I think they could; then that of course takes us back again to the man erecting his own buildings; that makes the difference very much.

6249. Pending the abolition of settlements, on which you lay great stress, could not power be given for special facilities in legislation of this kind, enabling life tenants to sell for the purpose of small holdings?—They can sell, every life-tenant can sell the land, but they cannot take the money. I do not know what you could do to facilitate the sale in that way.

6250. They have power under the present Settled Land Act to sell for the purpose of small holdings?—They can sell for anything they please, but they cannot take the purchase-money.

6251. But could there not be further legislation to relieve them from the difficulties and annoyances under the Settled Land Act; do you see any way of making an improvement in the Settled Land Act for the purpose of giving facilities enabling the life-owner to sell for the purpose?—You could make improvements; as for instance, authorising the life-owner to give a free conveyance and to charge the cost of it on the purchase-money; certain little amendments you could make in that way; but I no not know whether they would come to much.

6252. I asked the question, because you spoke of the difficulties attaching to a landowner who was trying to create small holdings, and was prevented by the terms of the Settled Land Act. Could not improvements be made in the legislation which we are contemplating that should enable a limited owner to do that?—You could make such improvements, but to my mind the objection would be that it is another way of nursing the system of life tenants, making the system of life tenants easy.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6253. I think you said that in Huntingdonshire the large farms had disappeared, but you did not tell us what has become of them; have they been divided into small farms or largely thrown on the hands of the landlord?—I should say that they have most likely been divided into farms of the next size in largeness, say a farm of 1,000 acres divided into two of 500 acres, and a farm of 700 acres divided into two of 350 acres. I do not think these 1,000-acre farms have been broken up into 20 holdings of 50 acres each.

6254. Do you think that the landlord divided them, and put up buildings?—On many of the farms the buildings of some smaller farms would still be in existence; so that there would not be much building necessary in that case.

6255. You mentioned that there was an actual increase in the number of holdings of under 50 acres; have you ascertained whether there has been an increase of actual farms as distinguished from villas?—No. Taking Dr. Ogle's figures, they only tell you that the number of holdings has increased. I should think that in Huntingdonshire there are not a large number of villas.

6256. All over the country are not the returns all vitiated by the fact that villas have been built, and are being built on considerable plots of ground?—Yes, I should say that that does affect the returns.

6257. Then with regard to the inclosure of strips of waste by the roadside and so on, is the law sufficient at the present time; does it give a right to a man who has been in the habit of grazing cows from time immemorial?—If he has been in the habit of doing so for 30 years; that is the law of England. If you can prove that you have had your undisputed grazing there for 30 years, then you have your absolute right to it.

6258. Does the law give any right in the case of proof of the use of the ground as recreation ground for the public for an unlimited period?—No; the law does not recognise the public; it recognises food for a cow or a donkey, but it does not recognise the rights of the public to come and go and to have recreation, except under special Acts; as for instance, with regard to open spaces round London.

6259. Have you had occasion to pay attention to the law of Scotland on this subject with regard to the absence of any prescription?—No.

6260. With regard to illegal inclosure by landlords, your suggestion, I understand is, that a landlord who does this kind of thing should be imprisoned without the option of a fine?—Yes.

6261. Do you not think that it would perhaps be a little difficult to pass so severe a law; is there no other means by which you can guard against that which is so frequently done, namely, the landlord inclosing and then allowing the parties interested to go to law to show their right?—I will give up the imprisonment and be content with a good heavy fine; but I think it is essential that the proceedings should be criminal, that you should not have the enormous expense of a civil action, and that the punishment should be something very substantial.

6262. Do you not think that there should be some public authority who should have the duty to prevent such inclosure, and power to knock down such inclosures?—Yes, I do. I have urged in my evidence in chief, that there should be a distinct

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

distinct authority, not only the local authority, the County Council, but a nearer authority, a village or district authority.

6263. Who should have the power actually to prevent these things?—Not only the power but the duty to do it.

6264. With regard to the difficulty of getting land in small plots, as distinguished from greater estates, have you any experience of the class of people who have been described to us as land butchers, who buy the land on a large scale with a view to sell it on a smaller scale?—I cannot say that I have had any experience of land butchers myself.

6265. Do you think that there has sprung up, or is likely to spring up, such a class of people who would buy large tracts of land in order to sell them in small plots at a reasonable profit?—I have no experience of any such people; they may exist, but I have not come into contact with them.

6266. You are aware that there are some small farm associations now operative; do you think that there is a probability that anything of that kind may spread as a commercial undertaking?—I do not want to criticise the efforts of other people; but my opinion of small farm companies is that their management has not been exactly judicious or successful.

6267. With regard to the demand for small purchases as distinguished from small tenancies, I think, in answer to the Right honourable Chairman, you told us your own opinion with regard to the relative advantages and disadvantages; but as a matter of fact do you find that there is much desire to acquire the ownership of land by small people?—In some parts of England there is a very strong desire; in other parts I cannot say from my own knowledge that there is, but I know parts of England where the little people will give fabulous prices for small pieces of land. Within the mining districts of Glamorganshire, that is within the range to which people go who have made a little money by mining, the prices that they will give are something incredible; there is such demand that they bid against each other, and will give 80 *l.* an acre for land that is not worth 30 *l.* an acre.

6268. Is not that exceptional; taking England generally do you think that there is a large demand for small ownerships?—I should think that where you have anything above the size of a village, anything like a small town, you have a demand for small ownerships.

6269. Is that demand for ownership for the ownership of farms or for the ownership of plots of accommodation land?—I do not think that these divisions, which are so easy to make in words, exactly correspond with divisions in fact. A man likes to have three or four acres of land; you may call it a plot of land, or you may call it a little farm. The distinction does not altogether exist to my mind. You may call a man a farmer, for instance, who keeps half-a-dozen cows.

6270. Near a village do you think there is a great demand for the purchase of land for the purpose of cultivation, not as an investment?—Yes.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6271. With regard to the case of the farm of 33 acres, for which you had 23 applications, what proportion of those men do you think would have been willing to pay down one-fourth or one-fifth of the value, and a somewhat increased rent as a sinking fund, and to put up the buildings themselves?—But the buildings were there.

6272. In that case, the buildings were there. What proportion of your 23 men do you think would have been ready to pay a fourth or a fifth of the purchase-money, and something beyond the rent as a sinking fund, in order to acquire the property?—It is very difficult to answer a question about 23 men, whom I then heard of for the first time in my life.

6273. Do you think that a large proportion of them would have been ready to do so?—I think the present tenant would have done so. I think he would have moved heaven and earth to have done something of the kind; and I should not wonder if he does.

6274. Why is the farm to rent if the present tenant does not want to leave it?—It is not to rent; he is in it.

6275. I thought you spoke of a farm of 33 acres which was in the market to let, and for which you had a very large number of applicants?—Yes, I chose one of them; and if the man now in could have had any help in buying it, I think it likely he would have bought it.

6276. With regard to the local authority to whom you would give this power, I think you said that the County Council would be too large and too landlordy an authority, as it were?—I did not say too landlordy. I think they are too distant, and do not know enough about particular cases.

6277. What is the nearer authority to whom you would give it?—The power of purchasing land?

6278. The power of acquiring it and letting it out in small holdings?—The authority would have to be large enough not to be a mere village clique; it would have to be something between the parish and the County Council.

6279. What is the authority I mean to whom you would give the power to acquire land, and sell or let it out?—It might I should imagine be possible to create a department of the County Council who should have this power, the members of the County Council coming from a particular district. But I do not know that I could answer straight off as to the best composition of such an authority. I should say that it should be larger than the parish, and smaller than the county.

Chairman.

6280. The proposed district councils might meet your views?—They would be somewhat near it if they proved a success.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6281. Another witness suggested the proposed district council; but I should like to ask you whether there are any existing authorities which you think might do that?—I do not know that I could name any existing authority who I think would do it satisfactorily.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6282. Do you think that the municipalities of small towns in populous places would do?—I was thinking rather of country districts. I do not see why the municipalities of small towns should not do.

6283. In the country districts is the parochial authority a sufficiently constituted authority to do it?—I should say certainly not.

6284. With regard to the application of something like the Ashbourne Act of England you propose that the central authority should be the British Government?—Yes.

6285. And no collateral security whatever?—There would be the security of so much being paid down by the man.

6286. But in the first instance?—Twenty per cent. paid down, cash actually paid down.

6287. But you do not propose that any local authority or any local area should in any way guarantee the payment?—No, I should be content with the 20 per cent. paid down, and the 4 per paid afterwards, which would be a sinking fund. The possible risk would diminish every year.

6288. Do you think that that is an undertaking which would be justified on economic as distinguished from political grounds? I think so.

6289. Without any limit to the size of the farms?—No, I should put a limit to the size of the farms.

6290. What limit would you put?—I think I should put the limit at about 100 acres in the case of the central authority; 100 acres, as a matter of fact, is not a good agricultural limit; multiples of 70 are a better agricultural limit: 70, 140, and so on; 70 seems rather low; 140 seems rather high. For the central authority on the whole, I should propose to put 100.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

6291. That would be your extreme limit?—Yes, the maximum. For the local authority, I should put it much lower than that.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6292. In case your scheme should not prove sufficient for the people who might not be ready with the purchase-money to purchase, have you turned your attention to whether there might be any amendment in the system of compensation for improvements by which tenants might be enabled to put up their own buildings, with security for compensation in case they left the land?—I have considered the modes of compensation, and I am acquainted with the provisions inserted in a Bill of last year for the purchase of improving the tenant's security. A good deal might be done in that way, but I doubt whether that is the best line to take up.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

6293. Do you find that the buildings placed by small freeholders on their farms are satisfactory, especially with regard to the dwelling house?—I do not think they are so stylish as what a good landlord would put up.

6294. At the same time do you think they are good enough?—I think they are adequate for the purpose. My impression is that we shall not be able to maintain our present standard of comfort, elegance, sanitary convenience, and so on. We have gone on the assumption that landlords are people with money to spend. At the present time we shall have to be content with something humbler.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

6295. The amount of quit-rent becomes a very important question, does it not, in its relation to the amount of money which a man has to spend on his holding?—Yes, it does certainly.

6296. That would of course largely, if not chiefly, depend on the amount of the purchase-money?—Yes, it would.

6297. Would you advocate that the local authority in securing land should go to the open market, that is to say, should become a bidder at public auction, or should have the right of pre-emption to buy the land?—The question as to the right of pre-emption comes to me rather as a surprise; but at first view I do not see any objection to giving the local authority that right. It is something entirely novel to me, and there may be objections to it which I do not apprehend at present; but I can conceive that if a landlord stated that there was land to be sold at so much, the local authority might have the right of pre-emption given to them, I do not pledge myself to that; there may be things that I do not see straight off against it.

6298. Coming to the case of the existing tenants, take the case of the little man in Essex, had he the chance of buying the land?—The landlord would have sold it to him if he had the means of paying for it. It was he who told me about it; it was in consequence of a death; it was a compulsory sale by a man's executors.

6299. I think that when you dealt with the case of existing tenants, you said that you would be willing to give to a small sitting tenant on an estate the power so apply to either the central authority or some local authority to purchase his farm?—Yes.

6300. Would you give power to any isolated tenant to buy his farm in the middle of an estate?—Do you mean compulsory powers?

6301. Yes?—I did not contemplate in that case the exercise of compulsory powers at all through the central authority; I only contemplated compulsory powers in the case of the local authority.

6302. But supposing that there are estates in the market (as there often are), with a very large number of small holders on them, would you give to the existing small holders any more favourable right than to any others; would you be inclined to give them the right of pre-emption in view of the fact that they made improvements on the farms?—It would be exceedingly difficult to say in the case of the sale of an estate held by a number of small tenants, that they should have the right of pre-emption, and in the case of an estate held by large tenants, that they should not. Take the case of an estate of 10,000 acres held by only 10 tenants, and a neighbouring estate of 10,000 acres held by 100 tenants, both in the market; could you say, in the one case, that the 100 tenants shall have the right of pre-emption; and, in the other case, that the 10 tenants shall not; it would be very difficult, I think.

6303. You

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Mr. *Thomas Ellis*—continued.

6303. You said, I think, that you felt that the existence of any considerable number of small holdings would diminish the class of hereditary labourers; do you think that if in any given district the small holdings were increased largely, we might hope for the actual abolition of hereditary labourers?—I think you would get somewhere near I do not say total abolition, because in every class you will have a residuum; but somewhere near the abolition of the man who owns absolutely nothing, and depends solely on his week's wages.

6304. Do you know the agricultural districts of Wales well?—North Wales, I know little; South Wales, I know.

6305. Do you know that, practically, throughout some extensive districts in Wales, there is no such class as the hereditary labourer class?—I believe so.

6306. And that that is owing to the fact that as a rule the holdings are small?—Yes.

6307. I think you said that in Glamorganshire there was a very brisk bidding for all these small farms?—There is an extremely brisk bidding.

6308. Do you not think that in a case when these estates are in the market, the present small holders are put at a very great disadvantage, inasmuch as, after they have spent money and labour in improving their farms, when the estates are in the market any outsider can come and be placed on an absolute footing with them in buying the farm; do you not think it is hard that in bidding for their farm they have had to buy in their own improvements, the fruits of their own labour?—Yes, it is hard; but I hardly see how you can do more for such a case than by the methods we have proposed.

6309. Still, generally you are of opinion that every facility which can be derived should be given in order to enable these tenants to purchase their farms either outright or through some such scheme as you have been dealing with?—Yes.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

6310. From your knowledge of this subject would you tell me whether you see any objection to an allotment holder having the power to purchase his allotment, to purchase the freehold of it?—I hesitate if I should allow that on the whole. The objection is that then the parish, the local authority, would have to be constantly going on taking new land for allotments.

6311. Do you see any objection to that?—It alters what I conceive to be the use of the allotment as a stepping-stone towards something else.

6312. But if he bought the allotment he would be doing exactly what you think is so desirable, would he not?—Yes; but when he is so settled you must get a new allotment for somebody else in that case.

6313. Do you see any objection to that?—I am not prepared to say that I should object to that; but it does make the allotment question a more difficult one if you are to have this constant shifting, an allotment ceasing to be an allotment, and taking new ones. I do not say that I object to it, but take care that you do not by giving people power to buy up existing allotments, let the thing come to a dead stop.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

6314. But you contemplate a second authority having power to take land for the purpose of creating small holdings. I do not see what validity there is in your objection in regard to the allotment people also exercising the same power?—You will want to apply all this, the 20 per cent. and so on to the allotments; you must apply the whole of the system of quit rent.

6315. Knowing that you have given a great deal of attention to the subject, I only asked for the purpose of my own information whether you saw any reason against it?—Yes, I do see some reason against it. I can conceive of the business becoming so complicated for the local authority that the expenses and difficulties would mount up. Supposing that an allotment holder owning a rood wants to buy it up, he has to pay two-fifths of the purchase-money and a quit-rent; the mere expenses of keeping accounts would cause complication in that case.

Mr. *Compton Lawrence.*

6316. And this, too, bears upon the same question, does it not. Would not there be great physical difficulty; you have got a large plot of land laid out in allotments, and if a man in the far corner wanted to buy one allotment, you would have to give a right of road over the whole. Is not the difficulty quite as much a physical one as a moral one?—Yes, I think there would be all sorts of difficulties.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

6317. Would not that be met by the allotment authorities saying that those who want to purchase must purchase an allotment on certain portions, not in the middle of the field, but at the side?—You can get all this done on paper; but it is one thing to get it done on paper and another thing to get people to work it fairly and successfully. You do not want to increase the difficulties of the local authority, to add to the wheels of the machine.

6318. I do not see myself what reason you have given for the difficulty which you have suggested?—Would you mind my saying this? I do not see exactly what would be gained by the purchase of an allotment; you have the local authority ready to take up other lands to supply these people; why fix on these particular plots which are serving a great use as nurseries, when you have other means of providing for the men who can pay something down. I dislike interfering with the allotment; I take it to be the lowest rung on the ladder that the man should mount on, and not try to cut it off and make it his own.

6319. According to my view, and according, as I understand, to yours, a man who has been cultivating a quarter or a half an acre for some years becomes attached to it, he knows all about it, and it would encourage him in thrift if he were able to apply a certain sum of money to buy it. It seems to me to carry out your own object?—Why should he not have another piece

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*— continued.

of land, and give up his allotment in order that another man may profit by it as he has done.

6320. I am only speaking from general experience of what the desire of the people is who have a small plot of land, have put up a shanty upon it, have become attached to it, and to whom the knowledge that they are able to buy it, is a great inducement. What objection is there to that?—My objection is that you take the allotment away from the people at the bottom.

6321. Would you not give the small holder power to redeem his perpetual quit-rent if he purchased under the terms of paying a quit-rent?—No, on the whole, I think not, for this reason, that I consider it desirable to enforce rules against sub-letting and sub-division. I should be very sorry to see this country cut up into *morcellements* such as exist in some countries. Moreover, we do not want to see the small holder setting up as a small landlord, and sub-letting to someone else. I consider it perfectly reasonable to enforce conditions against sub-division and sub-letting. Supposing that you had these holdings merely in the form of covenants, in the first place the local authority would not be reminded of them as they would be by the paying of an annual quit-rent, and in the second place the men would grumble more. But if you had a quit-rent of 10*l.* a year or so then the local authority when it collected that rent would look after the farms, and the man paying the quit-rent would also feel that there was nothing very unreasonable in having to observe the conditions under which he took the farm.

6322. Then you do not permit small holders to become freeholders?—Yes; many freeholds in England pay quit-rents.

6323. Do you consider that a man is a freeholder who is not able to divide his estate, say of two acres, into two holdings of one acre?—Yes. I do not see any objection to prohibiting extreme sub-division. There are evils from big properties; but I think we must not shut our eyes to the evils of extreme sub-division in European countries.

6324. What evils of extreme sub-division have you in your mind?—In parts of Germany the sub-division is carried to such an extent that a single tree, with a few feet of ground round it, will be the whole holding of a man. I should say that that is an evil which is as palpable as the evils of great estates in this country. You have half the Legislatures of Europe compelled to face the evils arising from this extreme sub-division. I believe, in many European countries the Legislature have found it necessary to prohibit sub-division beyond certain limits.

6325. Could you name one?—Bavaria, I believe, is one of them. There are so many of these little states that I cannot remember which of them have and have not; but if you will give me time to look it up I will undertake, in a few hours, to give you the names of half-a-dozen countries where, at one time or another, they have prohibited sub-division beyond certain limits.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

6326. Are you referring to sub-division of freehold, or of a man's rights over the land?—I referred to the two together. But the actual division of the land between different people is prohibited, is it not?

6327. I know of no such instance; you may be better informed than I am. But I should like to clear this point up; you would not, as I understand, permit the small holder really to enjoy the same rights as the large holder in respect to his freehold?—That is stating in general terms what I consider to be a matter of one or two rules. I would prohibit him from sub-dividing his holding beyond certain limits, and I would prohibit him from letting it; subject to that I do not want to interfere with him.

6328. But does it not strike you that if a man owned an acre of land under such conditions as that, it would not form a very tempting thing for him to save money to purchase it. If when he got his acre he could not do what he liked with it, you would surely rob that acre of a considerable amount of attraction?—Exactly; but as it is the man will not get his acre at all. It is not a fair comparison to say, "Is it not nicer to have your acre and to be able to do what you like with it, than to have your acre under certain restrictions?" when the fact is that he could not have his acre at all if he did not have it under those conditions.

6329. As I understand, then, you would not even allow him to let it?—Quite so.

6330. So that a man in his old age having tilled his acre and cultivated it, could not get anybody else to do it for him when he was no longer able to do it for himself?—There is the means of hiring labour surely.

6331. I should have liked to have had some more satisfactory explanation from you. It seems to me that you would rob the acre of a great deal of its attraction, and that necessarily the effect of that would be to prevent small holdings?—But surely the answer to that is, that if people are so very particular that they cannot put up with, as I think, these very reasonable conditions, let them buy land for themselves without coming to the public authority. All we say is, "If you come to us to assist you in becoming a landowner you must put up with certain conditions."

6332. It does not strike you as militating against the scheme?—No.

Mr. HENRY HERBERT SMITH, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

6333. I THINK you are a land agent and surveyor?—Yes.

6334. Carrying on business in London and at Chippenham, in Wiltshire?—Yes.

6335. You are a Fellow of the Institution of Surveyors and agent to the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Methuen, Lord Crewe, and other landowners?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

6336. Will you tell us the particulars of Lord Lansdowne's estate in Wiltshire?—Lord Lansdowne owns in Wiltshire about 11,000 acres of land; 1,600 acres are taken up by Woodland Park

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Chairman—continued.

Park and home farm, and the whole of the remainder is occupied by tenants.

6337. What are the sizes of the holdings?—There are two holdings that exceed 500 acres; one of 760 acres, which comprises two farms, and the other a single farm of 600 acres; this latter one is the largest farm upon the property.

6338. Have you any smaller holdings?—Yes; there are 11 holdings of between 200 and 500 acres, the largest of which is 386 acres, but here, again, this is a case where one tenant holds three farms; then there are 22 holdings of between 100 and 200 acres.

6339. We need not go further into details than that; and between 50 and 100 acres what have you?—There are 10 holdings of between 50 and 100 acres.

6340. And below 20 acres?—There are 11 holdings of under 20 acres.

6341. There is also, I think, a very large number of allotments?—There is a very large system of allotments, 600 acres.

6342. I think Lord Lansdowne has probably more allotments than any other landowner?—I believe it is the largest system of allotments in England.

6343. How long have you been agent to the estate?—I was appointed agent in 1881.

6344. And what has been your experience since then as to the prosperity of these farms?—My experience has been singularly successful on Lord Lansdowne's estate, so far as the payment of rent goes.

6345. Does that apply to all classes of farms?—No; as regards the larger farms, the hill farms, although I have never had one on hand. I have had to make heavy reductions in rent; but my experience has been that the smaller the holding has been the more applications I have had for it, and the higher the rent I have been able to get.

6346. The rent has been determined by the demand, and the demand has been greater for smaller farms?—Yes, quite so.

6347. Can you give us any particulars as to the rental and the payment of rent?—The rental previously to 1879 was about 21,000 *l.* per annum; the average rent received for the last three years has been 18,687 *l.* Out of this I have allowed an abatement of 20 per cent. on the farms, and this abatement has come to 1,690 *l.* These figures do not exactly tally with the rental above given, because there is about 3,000 *l.* a year of house and other property in Calne which is not subject to abatement, and the allotments are not subject to abatement. Some of the farms also have been permanently reduced.

6348. You have not been called upon to make abatements for house property; but have you made no reduction for allotments during the depression?—No, I have made no reduction for allotments during the depression, and I have not been asked to do so.

6349. Upon what sized farms have the largest reductions been made?—The largest reductions have been made on the farms exceeding 500 acres, and the next largest on those of between 200 and 500 acres, and the smaller farms of between 100 and 50 acres, and between 50 acres and 20 acres have received no permanent reduction at all.

Chairman—continued.

6350. Generally speaking, therefore, you would say that the smaller tenants have been better able to stand the hard times than the larger ones?—Certainly, according to my experience.

6351. And they have been paying better rents for the land?—Far better.

6352. It has been to the advantage of the landlord to have so many small tenants on his estate?—Yes.

6353. Does Lord Lansdowne do the repairs and improvements on the estate?—Since I have been agent to the estate he has done nearly the whole of the repairs; the tenants have given assistance in hauling, but we have found the materials, and practically done all the labour.

6354. Is the per-centage of repairs and improvements higher upon the large or upon the small farms?—Do you mean per acre?

6355. Yes?—The per-centage would be larger on the small farms, undoubtedly.

6356. The landlord's expenditure upon the small farms is larger than upon the large ones?—Quite so.

6357. That would, therefore, justify him in taking a larger rental in proportion to the acres?—Yes.

6358. But in spite of that you still think it is profitable to the landlord to have the small holdings?—I think so undoubtedly, because the difference of rent as compared with other estates where the holdings are larger, is considerably greater than the difference in the cost of repairs.

6359. Is your experience of the other properties for which you are agent the same as in the case of Lord Lansdowne's estate?—No, except in the case of Lord Crewe's estate, which is a small estate, intermingled with and adjoining Lord Lansdowne's. That is perhaps even more prosperous than Lord Lansdowne's.

6360. Is it divided into small holdings?—Yes, into quite small holdings.

6361. Therefore, really the success is almost proportionate to the size of the holdings?—I have found it so.

6362. In the case of other estates, you say that your experience has been different?—Yes; in the case of other estates where the holdings are much larger I have had a good deal of difficulty, not only in maintaining the rent but also in finding tenants; the two things probably go together.

6363. Under those circumstances you would be in favour, I suppose, of an extension of small holdings?—Yes.

6364. What is the difficulty in establishing small holdings at the present time?—One of the great difficulties is, that the majority of the estates in England and Scotland have been laid out for large farms, and, therefore, you have got a large house and a quantity of large buildings *en bloc* together; in most instances it would be almost prohibitive for the landlords to lay their estates out in small holdings on account of the expense.

6365. That is to say, that in the first place the existing buildings would be useless for small holdings?—Yes.

6366. And secondly, that new buildings would

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Chairman—continued.

have to be erected on each one of the holdings into which a large farm might be divided?—That is so.

6367. And if that had to be done by the landlord, it would be prohibitive?—Yes.

6368. You think that that is the chief reason why landlords do not now throw their large farms into small ones?—That is the chief reason; I think that most landlords, seeing that small holdings let much better than large ones, would be very glad, if they could, to have their large farms made into small ones.

6369. Do you think that there would be a demand for small holdings if they existed?—In the locality in which I live there is a very great demand for small holdings, and there has lately been a farm laid out in the neighbourhood for that purpose.

6370. By the landlord?—No, by the Small Farms Company.

6371. Is that Lord Wantage's Company?—Yes. I had a very large number of applications for small holdings, and having found that it was difficult to deal with the matter myself for Lord Lansdowne, I looked about for an intermediary who would work the thing for us. I communicated, at Lord Lansdowne's request, his Lordship being favourable to small holdings, with the Small Farms Company, and it resulted in the purchase of a farm by them upon his Lordship's estate, which has, I believe, been laid out in small holdings, and attended with very considerable success.

6372. May I just ask you this in passing; in that case were the tenants left to put up the buildings or were the buildings put up by the company?—The purchase has only just been completed, and although I believe that the whole of the land has been let, I am not quite certain what arrangement has been made with regard to buildings being put up by the tenants or by the owners.

6373. But, so far as your experience goes, there is no doubt about the anxiety of many of the labouring population to get land?—Quite so.

6374. Do you think it is important on national grounds that they should have facilities for that purpose?—I think so. I think that the falling off in the rural population is a serious matter for the country. No doubt the large tracts of arable land which have been laid down to grass, and really turned into what you might almost call cattle ranches or sheep ranches, have had the effect of narrowing the labour market very much indeed, and those labourers who have now difficulty in obtaining employment would be very glad to become small farmers, if it were possible for them to do so.

6375. Then the landowners desire it, and the labourers desire it; what other obstacles are there besides the difficulty of providing buildings?—One of the great difficulties is the great legal expenses that there are in making transfers to small buyers. Where you have a cumbersome title (as many of our large estates have) it is a very difficult matter to convey a small piece of land to a purchaser; the expenses are so large that they nearly eat up the purchase-money.

Chairman—continued.

6376. Cannot that be met in the case of the division of an estate by taking the same title for the whole estate?—If you get an intermediary to buy a block, and then sell again, yes. I have met the difficulty myself on Lord Lansdowne's estate in another way. I have sold a considerable quantity of small pieces of land and cottages by giving a direct conveyance from the owner of the estate, without any investigation of title, he undertaking to indemnify the purchasers against all incumbrances. But it would be very rarely that you could get the public generally to accept a title of that sort; it was only because Lord Lansdowne is very well known in the neighbourhood, and the people personally have trust in him as a man of high character. But it would not be a thing which you could work generally with the public.

6377. Would you favour legislation; would you approve of legislation for increasing the facilities for forming small holdings?—Yes, I think so.

6378. Do you see any objection to loans of money for the purpose?—No, I think it would be a good thing. Anything of that sort would have to be carefully worked; but if it were carefully worked, I should take it that it would be a very good thing to afford facilities for money loans.

6379. And you think that an operation of the kind might be carried out without serious risk?—I think so.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

6380. You spoke of the buildings being the difficulty in the way of landlords cutting their land up into small holdings; have you ever given serious consideration to dividing the land and leaving the provision of the buildings to the care of the holder?—Yes; I have thought that over.

6381. Have you come to any practical conclusion about that?—The conclusion that I have come to is, that if the tenants were left to put up the buildings themselves on small holdings, the result would be that those buildings would be of a very temporary and not of a permanent character, and this would rather militate against the farm being successful.

6382. The buildings would not be so substantial as what the landlord would put up?—No.

6383. Do you think that they would provide themselves with buildings that would answer their purpose?—I hardly think they would be buildings that would answer their purpose. No doubt they would provide themselves with buildings of some sort or other, but I doubt very much whether buildings that I have seen them put up, by small tenants, would be such as would answer their purpose if they wished to be successful farmers.

6384. But the land companies are solving the difficulty in that manner, are they not?—I believe on the Lambourne Estate they are. I saw that estate once, and I believe they are; but I presume they offer special facilities in the way of rent for the small holders putting their own buildings up.

6385. The landowner could not do that so well?—No.

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Wednesday, 26th June 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

The Reverend EBENEZER LITTLETON, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

6386. You are, I think, a Nonconformist Minister?—I am.

6387. Where do you live?—At Withyham, near Tunbridge Wells.

6388. Have you been resident there long?—Twenty-two years.

6389. That is in the neighbourhood of Ashdown Forest, is it not?—On Ashdown Forest. I have been resident minister there for 22 years on the forest.

6390. Are there many small holders in your neighbourhood?—A great many; many of my own congregation.

6391. Are those holders owners or tenants?—Some of them are proprietors, owners of the holdings, and some rent them.

6392. Dealing with them as a whole, are they fairly prosperous?—Yes, I may say that they are very prosperous in our neighbourhood.

6393. Are they more prosperous, do you think, than the larger farmers in the same district?—Yes, I can answer for it that they are very much more so.

6394. And referring to those who are tenants and not owners, what proportion do their rents bear to the rents of the farmers in the neighbourhood?—They are very much higher.

6395. Is their land better land, or is it the same class of land that they pay higher rents for?—Originally the land was the same, but having had it in cultivation it now produces very much more; and they have raised the rents and raised the assessment in proportion to the better improvement of the holdings; therefore their rents are now much higher on account of the land being in a better condition than it originally was when it was made into small holdings at first.

6396. What is the size of these small holdings?—There are many cottages that have half-an acre, and they go up to two and a-half, three, and four acres.

6397. Do the people who live in these cottages get their whole living from the land, or do they work at daily labour besides?—On a holding of half an acre and a cottage they have the privilege of turning out what little cattle they may have, one or two sheep; or if they can get the run of a field they can keep a cow, and have the right of turning the sheep and cattle out on the forest. The commoners have that right, and with that and daily work (they are employed by farmers in the immediate neighbourhood) they get their living in that way; but with a larger holding they get an entire livelihood out of it; with a holding of five or six acres they live entirely out of it.

Chairman—continued.

6398. What is the cultivation of these small properties; what produce do they yield. I want to know what crops they grow?—They grow oats, hay, and a patch or two of wheat, and they keep pigs and a cow or two, and a few sheep; and these they have a right to turn out on the forest; and they grow vegetables; and some of them take their produce into Tunbridge Wells, and some send it from Crowborough Station to Hastings and St. Leonards.

6399. Do they grow any fruit?—They grow very little fruit.

6400. What sort of rents do they pay per acre?—A holding of a cottage and an outer building or two, with an acre of land, would be valued at about 200 *l.*, and would realise 8 *l.* or 9 *l.* a year rent.

6401. But in the case of the larger holdings, holdings of five acres, what do they pay per acre for that?—I really cannot say exactly the rental of that amount of land.

6402. You have said that the rental is higher than that of the farmers in the neighbourhood; if a man gets a cottage and out-buildings as well as an acre of land for 8 *l.* a year, that does not seem very expensive, in fact 8 *l.* a year would hardly more than cover the outlay on the buildings?—I am an executor of a will, and therefore I draw the rent of a holding of the description I have mentioned. The rent that would be obtained from an acre of land and a small cottage and a little outhouse is about 9 *l.* a year; that is what I get for it.

6403. But that does not prove that these people pay more rent than the farmers in the neighbourhood. What I wanted to know was whether you have any information which would show what was the comparative rent per acre of land which

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Chairman—continued.

which is paid by the larger farmers and by the smaller ones?—The holding I am now referring to is simply a piece of land which is laid down as a field, a meadow, and it has never been improved from what it has been for years. I am now speaking of some small holdings that have a miscellaneous growth about them that have been very much improved.

6404. Have the smaller holdings increased or decreased in recent times in your neighbourhood?—They have very much increased.

6405. How is that?—Because the agricultural operative has been so anxious to get land of his own to cultivate; it pays him better than working for the farmer and getting his usual wages.

6406. Are these new holdings ownerships; are they freeholds or tenancies?—Most of them are ownerships. The holders are persons who have saved a little money, borrowed a little, and purchased the holdings themselves.

6407. Then a man who is able to do that in your neighbourhood has not much difficulty in getting the land?—There is no land to be got hold of in our neighbourhood; they cannot get it.

6408. But you say that these small holdings have largely increased?—Only on the forest, which is uncultivated land; that is where they have increased. There is no land to be got anywhere else.

6409. To whom does the forest belong there?—Lord De la Warr is the lord of the manor.

6410. Can he sell freeholds out of the forest?—He can enfranchise it, and make freeholdings; I have known several who have done that; but I do not know whether he has any power of selling the land. I think the Land Commissioners have the power, but not the lord of the manor.

6411. Is the forest, which is to some extent a common, being sold into freeholds?—Yes. I purchased a piece for one of my congregation about two years ago. I gave 3 *l.* 12 *s.* for 27 perches from the Land Commissioners here in London. (No. 67 on the map.) Mr. Mepham is the owner; it was bought for him.

6412. Is that 3 *l.* 12 *s.* the price of the land?—That was the price of the land, and I have the parchment. The title to it was given by payment of 3 *l.* 12 *s.*, and I hold the title; and I let the man have 25 *l.* as a mortgage, on condition that he would build a house upon the land, which he has now done; he finished it about nine months ago, and he pays me 5 per cent. for the money I advanced him. £.25 I advanced him; he had a little of his own; he paid the 3 *l.* 12 *s.* for the price of the land. It was, I may say, an enclosure before that; he put a fence round it, and the Land Commissioners sold it to him for 3 *l.* 12 *s.* He has built a very nice house, a cellared house. The mortgage deed was drawn up by my solicitor for securing me the 25 *l.* I should think that the land and house together would be worth about 150 *l.* That is only a garden, of course, I am now referring to.

6413. That seems to be more in the nature of a residence than a small holding?—But the land was purchased; and if more land could be got from the Land Commissioners in the same way, it would be a great benefit.

Chairman—continued.

6414. In the brief of your evidence which has been supplied to me, you say that the rents for small holdings are double, and in some cases treble, the rent of an ordinary farm?—Yes.

6415. Will you give me some illustration or proof of that. What is the rent of ordinary farms in your neighbourhood?—The larger the farm is, I have found the less the rent is; the smaller they get the higher in proportion the rents appear to be, until they get into small holdings, when they are very much higher if the rent is compared with the larger farms.

6416. What is the rent of the larger farms and what is the rent of the smaller holdings per acre, exclusive of houses?—I do not know that I can tell you just exactly the rent per acre of the large farms.

6417. How do you know then that the rental of the large farms is higher than the rental of the smaller ones?—I think I have had sufficient knowledge about that. I feel certain that that is so; that the rents are very much lower in the higher farms in proportion to the small holdings.

6418. At the same time you cannot tell me what is the rent either of the larger or small farms?—They vary according to the position of the farms, and I suppose to the quality of the farms. I could not say any more than that. I know that the rents are very much higher on the smaller ones.

6419. Seeing that in your district the number of small ownerships has considerably increased in the last few years, I should like to know whether you think that further facilities are required for their extension?—It is just that thing that the people want granted to them; they want some facilities for obtaining the land, the waste common land, that is now unproductive, in order to get hold of it, to break it up and cultivate it; they cannot do that without a little help.

6420. You have been telling me of one case which I understand to be an illustration of others, in which they have got hold of the waste and it has been cultivated?—But it would be very much more largely carried out if they could have the facilities which you propose.

6421. What facilities are you referring to now?—Such as to obtain some money by an easy percentage in order to purchase land and to erect buildings.

6422. But how do these people who have become small holders obtain the money; they obtain it without any facilities?—There are many of them now who would be very glad to take from one to five acres and purchase them, who have just sufficient to pay a fourth of the purchase-money or a fifth, or a third, or whatever may be suggested, in order to cultivate them, but who would not be able without assistance to do that.

6423 They would be able to find the one-fifth or the one-fourth of the purchase-money, you say?—Yes; and pay interest for the rest.

6424. But can they not borrow the money now?—There is no security that they can give, unless they can get the land; if they got a title to the land they could borrow it.

6425. If they get the land can they not borrow three-fourths of the purchase-money; if they

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Chairman—continued.

they are able to provide one-fourth of the purchase-money themselves can they not borrow the remaining three-fourths on the security of the land?—I think there would be a difficulty in doing that.

6426. How have these people done, of whom you have been speaking, who have become small holders?—They have saved up. What they have saved has been from their own earnings or the little cottages that come by will to them, by death, and so on.

6427. I am not speaking of those which have come to them by inheritance; I am talking of the new holdings; in that case have they found the whole of the money out of their own savings?—Yes; some have been assisted in the way I have told you. I mentioned one case of a man who was assisted with 20 *l.* or 30 *l.* by giving the title in the mortgage deed; they have borrowed in that way.

6428. What I want to know is why what these people have done cannot be done by the others; if some of these labouring people, by thrift and industry, have saved money enough to buy their land, why do you say that facilities must be given to enable the others to do the same; why could not the others do it if they were equally thrifty?—What has been done is very small in comparison with the requirements and wants of the neighbourhood. Many cry out more for work than for bread, and they cannot get it. There are plenty who can do the same as these people have done, who have not the means of doing what they have done.

6429. But would those people who have not the means and whom you would wish to assist, be successful, do you think, on the land?—They would be equally successful with the others; but providence has not put them in the way to accumulate sufficient to do what others have done who by accident, or at least by good management, have saved sufficient money in order to purchase a piece of land, and get a holding.

6430. Supposing that the local authority of your district were empowered to lend these people three-quarters of the purchase-money, do you think that that would be a safe transaction?—I think certainly so; I may say, if you will allow me here (it is running a little off the point), that I was a candidate for the County Council, in East Sussex, and the question was put to me several times at the meetings in reference to this Bill, and my views upon it; and the questions that were put to me by the operative agriculturists on the matter as to getting land and increasing the small holdings in our immediate neighbourhood, were whether in the case of those who have at present small holdings, there would not be sufficient security for them to get five or six or ten acres, without paying any money down at all, because of the house they have and of the small holding they have. There is one holding I know close by my house, that holding is valued at 200 *l.*; and the question is whether that would not be sufficient security for the holder to get five or six

Chairman—continued.

acres, which he even now wants to add to his small holding.

6431. I do not know what answer you made to those questions; but you are aware, of course, that nobody has ever proposed to give such facilities in any Bill; that is to say, that nobody has proposed to advance the whole of the money required for the purchase either of a new or of an original holding?—Exactly.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6432. I did not quite understand about the house that you said was worth 200 *l.*; is it built, or to be built?—It was built some 10 or 12 years ago.

6433. Whose property is it?—The property of Mr. Haysman, who lives there.

6434. Then the man has a property worth 200 *l.* which he could give as security?—Yes; and he wants to get five or 10 acres of uncultivated land on the forest to join up to it.

Chairman.

6435. Taking that particular instance, it is the case of a man who has a security worth 200 *l.*, and wants 12 acres of land more?—That is exactly it.

6436. What is the value of the 12 acres of land?—It is waste uncultivated land on the forest.

6437. What price would you think that the Land Commissioners would be willing to part with it for?—As regards the 40 rods that was bought only a few yards from this person's place at Friers' Gate, near Lord De la Warr's residence, or about half-a mile from it (his name was Ashdown); he purchased the 40 rods, and gave 9 *l.* for it; that runs to about 4 *s.* a rod.

6438. What is the capital value; you are talking of rent now?—I am speaking of the forest land that he purchased to add to his holding.

6439. £. 9 for 40 rods is not 4 *s.* an acre?—I am confounding. £. 9 was paid for 40 rods.

6440. How much is that an acre?—It is a quarter of an acre.

6441. That is at the rate of 36 *l.* an acre?—Yes; that, of course, includes the law expenses and title, which Mr. Ashdown received on reclaiming the land.

6442. Then, I suppose that the value of the 12 acres of land that this man wants would be about 350 *l.*?—If there is any timber on the land, they have, of course, to pay for that; and I think he had to pay 2 *l.* (I must mention that) for a tree to Lord De la Warr; that was the timber; so that the land itself would come to about 7 *l.*

6443. I do not want to go into very small details; I want to know why this man, who has a security already laid aside worth 200 *l.*, should not be able to borrow the money on that security for this additional land that he wants to buy, without the intervention of the local authority; what claim has he upon the local authority, which represents all the ratepayers to find him capital when he has capital already?—He would not have capital sufficient to cultivate that 10 acres of land without borrowing; he has a house to live in but that is all.

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Chairman—continued.

6444. What are the chief difficulties that you see in the way of labourers or small owners obtaining possession of a holding as a freehold?—The difficulty, as I said just now, appears to me to be, that they cannot get the land.

6445. They cannot get the land because they have not the money; there is plenty of land, I understand you to say, there, but they cannot find the whole of the money required for the purchase?—Exactly, that is one difficulty.

6446. What other difficulties are there?—The next difficulty is the price that they have to pay for it when they do get it.

6447. But have you any suggestion to make whereby, by legislation, the price of land can be reduced. The price of this land that you are speaking of is fixed by a public authority, is it not; it is not fixed by a private landlord?—No, by the Land Commissioners.

6448. And the Land Commissioners work without any interest of their own in the matter, but are supposed to work for the public good, and if they fix a price, that must be assumed, I suppose, to be a fair price?—But I am not quite certain myself that they are open to sell to labourers on the forest, these cottagers, the land. I want to know that point myself, sir.

6449. But you begin by telling me that the number of small holders in you neighbourhood have been greatly increased in the last 20 or 30 years; I asked how that was done, and you said by the purchase of this land from the waste?—That has been so.

6450. Therefore I assume that the Land Commissioners are willing to do that, otherwise these owners would not have been created. What is the difficulty which at present exists in obtaining this waste land?—One difficulty is, as I say, that the people want assistance as to means; and, secondly, there is the difficulty of obtaining land from the Land Commissioners of late years.

6451. I understand you to say, that in late years, there has been a greater difficulty than there was before?—Yes, the conservators of the forest have not favoured what this Bill was intended for; they have shown that nothing can be done by the people themselves, but by an Act of Parliament, and they have not encouraged that.

6452. If these people were assisted by loans, either from the local authority or from anybody else, in order to obtain this land, what would they do about buildings?—The first thing they would do would be to erect a house.

6453. But how could they erect a house if they had no money?—Those who really were without any money at all could not undertake it; they must have some capital to begin with, but all they want is assistance.

6454. Are there many of your labourers, the people with whom you are acquainted, who would have enough money to pay one-fourth of the purchase-money down, and, in addition, to erect buildings?—Those small holders who have already holdings, want land in addition to their holdings, they would not want to build; but those who have none at all would, of course, have to live in the cottages they now live in until they could cultivate their land, first paying a fourth of the purchase-money down, and as they got on and increased from year to year, rising little by little, they would then, perhaps, erect their buildings afterwards.

Chairman—continued.

6455. You hope that out of the profits of their cultivation they would obtain money enough to erect buildings?—Exactly, afterwards.

6456. You are very favourable to the creation of small holdings, I suppose?—Yes, I think so generally. In fact, I was speaking to our rector; we had a chat about it; he told me that it was an idea the late Earl had in his mind with regard to Ashdown Forest, if he could carry it out, to make it into small holdings for the benefit of the people; he thought it would answer.

6457. You think that the possession of a small piece of land is calculated to raise the character of the labourers?—Very much; and I do not think there would be any objection to it by the rich persons in the neighbourhood at all, Lord De la Warr and others; I think they would facilitate it.

6458. How much land do you think would be necessary in order that a man might live upon it without extraneous means of subsistence?—I should say that he would be able to manage with about five acres, which he could cultivate himself.

6459. Could he and his family live upon five acres without any other assistence?—With the forest rights that are given to him, such as turning his cattle out, and cutting the litter and straw, and taking stones to a certain amount, I think that with five acres he might manage to get in time a livelihood. Of course he would have to work for farmers in the neighbourhood for a certain part of the time to make it up.

6460. Supposing that the local authority of your district, the County Council, or any other body, were authorised to lend money for this purpose, do you suppose that they would do so?—I think it is very likely that they would.

6461. I suppose that a great number of the persons who are returned to the County Council, and who vote for the County Council, have no immediate interest in the matter; they do not want land?—No; they are not the right parties to manage it very much.

6462. What I want to know is, would these people who have no direct interest in it, whose only interest is the general well-being of the district, be likely to take advantage of the authority given to them to lend the ratepayers' money for the purpose of creating small holdings?—Most unfortunately, in Sussex, the political views of those who represent us are not very favourable to encourage that, as perhaps they would be if we had those returned who are rather different in their views; they are large landowners and conservative in principle, and therefore they would not care very much; they would perhaps throw a wet blanket upon it. But still the popular opinion and impression is so widespread in reference to small holdings and getting hold of the land for the people, that they dare not go too far with that. I think they would help it in some way, and encourage it.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

6463. What is the nature of the land at Ashdown

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Sir *Edward Birkbeck*—continued.

down Forest; is it pretty good land?—Some parts of it are better than others.

6464. Because it appears to be a high price you mentioned as regards the selling value; from 36 *l.* to 40 *l.* per acre?—Yes, it is.

6465. Is there a railway near it?—No; we are four miles from a railway station.

6466. And what amount of stock is each of the small holders allowed to turn out on the forest; is it in proportion to the size of the holdings?—No, they are not particularly crippled about that. The person I spoke of, with this cottage worth 200 *l.*, has 14 sheep, he has two cows, and he has pigs; he can turn that cattle out in the forest. Those who have small holdings in Ashdown Forest have the right to cut the litter out of which they make manure. But if a person comes and buys a piece of that land, a large inclosure of 100 acres we will say, that is a very great injury to the neighbourhood, because the rights of the commoners are gone at once; that becomes private property, and they say, You must not touch the sand; you must not touch the stone; you must not cut the litter; you must not bring cattle out here. When the land on Ashdown Forest is sold to persons of means and capital it is an injury to the neighbourhood.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

6467. Is it not the fact that the Ashdown Forest is now regulated by an Order of the Land Commissioners dated 1885?—That is so.

6468. Under that Order is it the fact that the rights of the smaller holders, the commoners, such as the rights of turning out cattle and the rights of cutting litter and so on are secured?—Yes.

6469. Is there any question whether the rights of the whole of the small holders, copyholders as well as commoners, are secured?—Those who hold leasehold as well as freehold properties, have the right to these things.

6470. And then, as I understand, the further power of enclosure, either on the part of the lord of the manor, or the squatter, or the general public, is stopped?—Yes.

6471. You are not, perhaps aware that that is part of the regulation?—I did not know that.

6472. And in the case of those who rent small holdings, what tenure have they, do you happen to know?—A yearly tenancy. It is a very difficult matter to get hold of land on any other tenure than yearly tenaacy.

6473. Then, as a matter of preference, these small holders would rather possess the land if they could do so on some easy terms?—It would be much better for them because their improvements are their own, and they take a greater interest in the property if it is their own, than if they have it on a yearly tenancy.

6474. Are there, do you think, in your neighbourhood, any considerable number of people who are in a position to avail themselves of facilities such as you have described?—Yes; a great many.

6475. They would be able to get a portion of the capital to pay down, for instance?—Yes; there are a great many in the position of having a portion already, and who would be able to pay down so much as security.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

6476. With regard to those who have a small holding, and are engaged in other occupations, do they find any difficulty in getting occupation from the neighbouring farmers?—No, not at all.

6477. There is no question of opposition to, or jealousy of these men on the part of the farmers, on account of their being small holders?—No, I have not noticed that.

6478. You spoke of an acre of land and a cottage at 8 *l.* a year rental; what is the size of the cottage; is it a cottage or might we call it a small farmhouse?—It has no upstairs; it is on one floor.

6479. It is a cottage that would let at 4 *l.* a year, say?—The cottage by itself, severed from the land, would only realise about 4 *l.* a year.

6480. That leaves 4 *l.* a year for an acre of land?—Yes.

6481. That you would call a high price as compared with the larger farms?—Yes.

6482. And with regard to these small freeholders, I suppose their land was originally inclosed out of the forest?—Yes; a great number of those present holdings have been inclosed by the people themselves many years ago.

6483. Do these people pay any quit-rent to the lord of the manor?—Yes, some of them.

6484. Some of them do?—Yes; and some have enfranchised their land and made it free, and it is now their own holding.

6485. And the land of some of them has been what is called set out by the lord of the manor court?—Yes.

6486. And they are practically freeholders subject to an annual payment to the lord of the manor?—Yes; I will give you an instance. One who comes to my chapel as a member, two years ago purchased two cottages and about two acres of land as a holding on Ashdown Forest; he gave 210 *l.* for it, and he felt anxious to make it freehold. It was then subject to a quit-rent to the lord of the manor of 2 *s.* 6 *d.* a year; he made it freehold and it cost him 50 *l.*; and now it is freehold.

6487. You said that an acre of the waste was purchased at 36 *l.*; when you say waste it was part of the common uncultivated?—Exactly.

6488. That you would consider a high price for an acre of that land?—Yes.

6489. With reference to these freeholds that were originally inclosures, do they change hands occasionally; are they sold occasionally?—Yes, frequently; and at death they come by will to other parties.

6490. Can you give us some idea as to the price they realise when sold?—If a holding is subject to a quit-rent it will not fetch so much, of course, in the market when a labourer buys it as if it is freehold.

6491. First of all do they get ready purchasers?—Yes.

6492. Do you consider that the price they realise is a high one?—Yes; they generally get a very good price for any small holding, a cultivated green spot and a cottage on the common; there is no difficulty in selling it.

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

6493. What is the nature of those holdings which you said were easily transferable at death; are they freehold holdings, or what are they?—Those which are admitted on the roll of the manor, as well as the freeholds.

6494. Then they are freehold, copyhold, and so on?—Quite so. I have purchased myself, and I am executor of one or two wills which have had to be admitted on the roll of the manor; that is representing the copyholds in that case.

6495. They are copyhold and freehold holdings; not holdings of a modern description, as is proposed under some of the Bills which are before Parliament at the present time, where there is a large quit rent payable; what I mean is that they are not a new class of tenure; they are the old and known class of tenure?—Yes.

6496. You said just now that the small holders have great difficulty in purchasing land. I presume that is because the landlords in your neighbourhood do not like parting with land in small pieces?—There is not any land that the landlords in our neighbourhood would care to dispose of; they would rather increase the land for themselves by purchasing it instead of selling it to the people.

6497. Then, in your neighbourhood, there is not much land to sell?—There is not any, only the forest land; there are thousands of acres of that.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6498. I think I gather that the locality that you have been describing to us is peculiarly favourable to small holdings, because there is forest land available, and there are forest rights available?—There is everything to facilitate them. The people want to get on to the land, to break it up, and cultivate it.

6499. Do you think that in many parts of England there is land where there are such facilities for small holdings?—I do not know of any that has better facilities. I do not know sufficient of any other part of England to speak with regard to it. I have been here 22 years, and I know pretty well about it, but I cannot say that I know whether any other parts of the country have the same facilities that we have.

6500. Then, with regard to small holdings, you say that they are very highly rented, and you mentioned 4 *l.* an acre; does that include buildings?—The rent of small holdings includes the buildings of course.

6501. I mean in the case of a small holding that pays 4 *l.* an acre, would that be with or without buidings?—You could not get a holding with a building on it for 4 *l.* an acre; the cottage would be 4 *l.*, and the acre of land near about 4 *l.*, 8 *l.* together.

6502. You mean that independently of buildings the land is very highly rented at 4 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

6503. Is that a rich hop country where the land is generally very highly rented?—A great deal of the forest land has been cultivated in certain parts and spots by agriculturists, working operative men, who have turned it into hop gardens; it pays them very well.

6504. Can you give us no idea as to what kind of rents large farmers pay in that part of the world as compared with the 4 *l.* paid by the small

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

man?—There is a farm that is joining up to my chapel and house, that is 80 acres; it belongs to the Goldsmiths' Company, and the farmers pay 70 *l.* a year for it.

6505. Is that as good land as these small holdings?—Yes, that is pretty good land.

6506. Do not you call 80 acres a small holding?—Yes. He himself commenced in Ashdown Forest as a small holder, and he mortgaged his small holding there to get into this place, and he would be very glad to get out of this place to get into the forest again, and have it as his own.

6507. And with this farm of 80 acres how many horses does he keep on such a farm?—He has three horses and five cows, and he grows a miscellaneous lot of things; he has hops, oats, wheat, root crops.

6508. What I want to know is, is it a kind of farm that a man cultivates himself with his family, or has he to employ much hired labour?—He has not anybody in his employ except a carter boy; he himself and his son with his wife and daughters do the whole of it; he does not employ any men, only this carter boy.

6509. Are there many men of this kind in that part of the country?—Yes, a great many.

6510. Are they prosperous now?—Yes, they are doing well, and they want to get hold of more land.

6511. They want to get hold of more land to make larger farms?—Some of them have only two acres, and others half an acre; they want to get five or 10 acres of waste land to add on to it.

6512. Are many of the landlords inclined to cut up 500 acre farms into small farms of this kind?—They cannot get any land for the purpose.

6513. Is there any disposition, I say, on the part of landlords to cut up large farms into small farms of from 50 to 100 acres, or less?—No, they have gone in the other direction to my knowledge; they have not gone that way at all; they have made small farms with large ones, two or three into one, and laid it down instead of cultivating it, which is no good to the neighbourhood, but rather an injury.

6514. I want to know whether in the last half-dozen years there has not been, as other witnesses have told us, a turn in the tide, and if it were not for the difficulty about buildings, landlords would not be inclined to encourage the cutting up of large farms into small holdings?—They have not done it in my neighbourhood.

6515. I did not gather what your own plan is for the increase of small holdings?—There are plenty of persons there who would be very glad to have any facilities that you could offer them in the way of increasing their present very small holdings or getting hold of the land for the purpose of doing what others have done by getting hold of it and cultivating the land themselves.

6516. But I want to know what your own plan is for enabling them to do that. Are you generally inclined towards a plan such as Mr. Jesse Collings has suggested, that the State, or somebody assisted by the State, should advance a certain part of the value of the land, and that a man who wanted to have a farm of his own should pay down a certain proportion as security?—Yes. I may say that last Saturday I was speaking to one of our people who has a pretty good knowledge of

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

of this subject, who comes to my chapel; he is a small holder with a small holding; he said, "There are seven people close by your house I know" (he mentioned four of them whom I personally know) "who are willing to take 100 acres between them and pay a fourth of the purchase money down;" I had told them what I thought the Bill mentioned about that, and he said that they would be very glad to get that; they have sufficient capital of their own (these are working people) to pay a fourth of the purchase money down in order to get 100 acres between the seven.

6517. And you are in favour of a plan of that kind?—Yes; that is what they want.

6518. What size of farm would you like to see; would you like a 20-acre or an 80-acre farm?—I should say from about 10, 12, 15, up to 20 acres.

6519. You think that that is most beneficial?—Yes.

6520. Do you think that the men generally could live by that, or would they have to go to labour as well?—They would be able to cultivate it, and get employment with the neighbouring farmers that they have known so long; they would work amicably together and help each other; and it would pay them better in that way by having smaller holdings than larger ones.

6521. I suppose you also think that it would be very beneficial that there should be a proportion of such men as this 70 *l.* man, who does the work by himself and his family, with the assistance of one boy?—Yes, certainly; some have more means than others, you know.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

6522. I want just to ask you one question on a point that I cannot understand. You told Sir George Campbell that the rent of land in the neighbourhood for these small holdings was about 4 *l.* an acre, did you not?—That is this one I am speaking of, Haysman's, 9 *l.* a year; I say that the cottage rent is about 4 *l.* or 4 *l.* 10 *s.* a year.

6523. But the land can be bought in the neighbourhood for 36 *l.* per acre, which is a very high price?—Yes.

6524. Four per cent. upon that would be 1 *l.* 8 *s.* 10 *d.* an acre; how do you come to consider that the rent would be 4 *l.* an acre; can you explain that apparent discrepancy to me?—Why, 9 *l.* should be paid for the 40 rods I am speaking of.

6525. If land is worth 36 *l.* an acre for the purchase, 4 per cent. of that would represent 29 *s.* per acre as the rent, and you estimate that the rental value per acre is 4 *l.* Can you explain that discrepancy?—I can only explain what the people have said so many times to me, that the price of getting the land from the Land Commissioners is very high?

6526. But that is very low as compared with the rental. I should consider it very low. Would it not be more advantageous to buy land at 36 *l.* an acre, or rent it at 4 per cent. of the purchase-money, than to pay 4 *l.* an acre rental for it?—The waste land has not been got into cultivation; but this land of Haysman's is in good condition. Perhaps that would account for it.

Mr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

6527. WHAT is your profession?—I am an estate agent.

6528. Where do you live?—At Claydon, near Winslow.

6529. In what county is that?—Buckinghamshire.

6530. Have you had any experience of small holdings in your neighbourhood?—I have. We have about 10 in number in Buckinghamshire and Derbyshire. I have charge of another place belonging to Lady Verney, and between the two places we number about ten small holders.

6531. Are these small holders in a satisfactory position?—Yes, very.

6532. Are they small owners or small tenants?—Tenants only.

6533. What sort of rents do they pay?—The average is 28 *s.* per acre.

6534. Is that higher than, or the same as, the rents of the larger farms?—A little higher, a few shillings higher.

6535. Are those rents paid with regularity?—Very regularly.

6536. And the people themselves are fairly prosperous, you think?—Fairly prosperous, apparently.

6537. Do you think that they have done better on the whole than the larger farmers?—I think they have.

Chairman—continued.

6538. In proportion to the size of their holdings?—Yes, they appear to have taken more out of their holdings than the large farmers do.

6539. You are favourable, then, to the creation of small holdings?—Certainly.

6540. Do you think that they should be ownerships or tenancies?—I do not find that there is any desire for ownership near Claydon.

6541. The desire is to obtain tenancies?—Yes.

6542. Why is there no desire for ownership, or why are tenancies preferred to ownerships?—They feel that they require the capital; they have to manage the holding, to stock and crop it.

6543. But that objection would not arise if the capital were lent to them, would it?—They would have to pay one fourth of the purchase-money; that might absorb all their capital.

6544. You think that the obligation to pay one-fourth of the purchase-money would interfere in the case of a great number of these people?—I am afraid in many cases it would.

6545. And what you would desire would be that some facilities should be given for the increase of small tenancies?—Yes.

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Chairman—continued.

6546. Have you considered in what way that could be brought about?—By facilities being given to them in the way of advancing them money to crop and stock and improve their holdings.

6547. Your suggestion is not only then that the land should be found for them. Perhaps I have not understood you aright. Do you propose that these tenancies should be left to voluntary arrangement with the existing landlords, or do you think it would be necessary that the local authority should become the landlord?—I think the local authority ought to have it; I do not say it so far as my landlord is concerned, but, generally speaking, it would be a good arrangement to have it in the hands of the local authority.

6548. That is to say, that the power which the local authority at present have to buy land for allotment should be extended so as to enable them to provide small holdings?—I do not think an actual purchase is desirable so far as I have any knowledge.

6549. I am not talking about purchase; you know that under the Allotments Act the local authority have power to buy land, and then to let it out in allotments of a certain size?—Yes.

6550. If their power were extended so that they could let land in larger quantities, say up to 50 acres, would that meet your views so far as that is concerned?—Yes, it would.

6551. Then you would propose that the local authority should find the money, should buy estates and break them up into small holdings, and let them to tenants?—Yes.

6552. Do you propose that, in addition to that, they should not only find the land at a fair rent, but find the money for stocking it?—That would be a great facility, I know, in many cases.

6553. What security would they have for loans of that kind?—I do not profess to go into that.

6554. Are you a landowner yourself?—No, I am not.

6555. Do you rent land yourself?—No, I do not rent any either.

6556. You are a ratepayer, of course?—Yes.

6557. Would you like your local authority to rate you for lending money to your neighbours in order to enable them to find the capital for carrying on their business?—Could it not be done on the same principle as advancing them money to buy the holdings.

6558. The security is very different, is it not; the security of land is one thing, and the security of a cow is another?—Yes.

6559. Would you like to lend money yourself to stock a holding?—That is a question that I have not gone into. It has just struck me that it would be a great help to them if such an arrangement could be brought about.

6560. Now that I have just pointed out to you some of the difficulties, do you not think it would be going rather far to employ the ratepayers' money for such purposes as that?—Perhaps it would.

6561. Supposing that the assistance were confined to finding the land at a fair price, do you not think that there would be a certain number of thrifty and industrious men who would be able to find capital enough to stock a small holding?—Yes, undoubtedly there would.

Chairman—continued.

6562. And would they not be the best persons to try the experiment with?—Certainly.

6563. And if they succeeded would not that be a stimulus to others to be thrifty and industrious too, and to save money for the purpose?—Yes, certainly.

6564. So far as your experience goes a decent, industrious man can succeed upon a small holding?—Yes, undoubtedly.

6565. And he could do that even in times such as we have been passing through of agricultural depression?—Yes, even with more advantage than the large farmers, so far as my experience has gone.

6566. In your experience are the small holdings worse or better cultivated than the large ones?—They are rather better cultivated.

6567. Is there more labour employed upon them?—More labour is put into them, I found, as a rule.

6568. I suppose, as a rule, the labour employed is the labour of the family?—Yes.

6569. There is not much paid labour?—Not much; it does not pay when a man has to hire labour.

6570. What sized holdings do you think there ought to be?—I should say from 20 to 30 acres; of course it all depends upon circumstances, and upon the ability of the person.

6571. Would that be sufficient to keep a family?—I should say about 30 acres would be sufficient to keep a small family.

6572. Do you find the farmers favourable to these schemes for creating small holding?—No, I do not.

6573. Why do they object to them?—They think that it would make the labourers too independent; they think it would raise the price of labour.

6574. Do you think that that is true?—No. I do not think it would at all interfere with farming, because in our neighbourhood there are more labourers than there is labour for; a great many more.

6575. I suppose it would have a tendency to raise the rate of wages, would it not?—I do not see that it would much.

6576. If it took from the labour market a certain number of those who are now being employed on weekly wages, it would enable those who remain to ask and get more?—Yes; but we have got a surplus of labourers just now.

6577. But the effect of a surplus is to keep down the rate of wages?—To a certain extent.

6578. And if there were no surplus the rate of wages would tend to go up?—Well, it might a little.

6579. Would it be a bad thing if it did go up a little?—No, I do not think it would. I do not think it would go up very much.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6580. Did I gather that you are an estate agent?—Yes.

6581. Do you belong to this part of the country?—No, I belong to the north.

6582. Where do you come from?—Clackmannanshire is my original country.

6583. Are

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6583. Are there any small holdings in Clackmannanshire?—It is so long ago since I was there that I forget.

6584. You do not know about that part of the world?—Not now; I cannot speak about it.

6585. About Buckinghamshire, I understand that the small holdings which now exist in your neighbourhood are only rented a few shillings more than the large ones?—Yes.

6586. Does that include the buildings?—Yes, it includes the buildings, where there are any.

6587. But in the 10 or 12 small holdings which you have mentioned, are they generally buildings?—Some have not buildings.

6588. What I want to get at is, whether the few shillings an acre more that is charged for small holdings is more upon the land, or more upon the land including buildings?—It is more upon the land only.

6589. Do you think that that represents the greater difficulty in collection and management?—No, not much; of course it does a little.

6590. At all events, the rent charged for small holdings in your part of the country is not excessive?—No, not by any means.

6591. Are they all under one landlord?—All that I am speaking of.

6592. Is he at all willing to create more small holdings in case they were wanted?—Yes, as cases arise. Where a man shows himself able to take a small holding, he is willing to grant it.

6593. In that case how is it managed about the buildings?—That is the difficulty.

6594. I want to know how that difficulty is dealt with?—Unless the tenant has a little capital himself to do it, it becomes a great difficulty.

6595. Are there any cases in which the tenant has done it?—Yes, there are.

6596. Then, in those cases, what security has the tenant for his property; is there any specific arrangement made?—There is no security at all.

6597. Has he not entered into any contract with the landlord in that case for compensation in case he goes out?—No; he trusts to his landlord.

6598. Does he not do it with the specific consent of the landlord, so that he might have a title to compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I suppose he would be entitled under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

6599. Is this a case in which the landlord is very much trusted?—Yes.

6600. Can you suggest any mode by which tenants might be encouraged to put up their own buildings with security for compensation in the case of landlords in whom they have not absolute personal trust?—It is difficult to suggest anything. Of course, where the landlord is not able to do, there is a great difficulty. Small holders, as a rule, are not able to put up buildings.

6601. And I think I may say that landlords, as a rule, are not too flush of cash, and are not able to put up buildings?—Yes.

6602. Can you suggest any way in which this difficulty is to be met?—No; I am not prepared to suggest any way. If anything can be done to advance them a little for that purpose, I think it would be a great advantage.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6603. At this moment is anything being done to increase the number of small holdings in your part of the country?—Yes, I have increased them by two lately.

6604. Are you agent for the estate?—Yes.

6605. Who is the landlord?—Sir Harry Verney.

6606. And you, as agent to the estate, have increased the number of small holdings?—Yes.

6607. What has been arranged about buildings in those cases?—That is the difficulty.

6608. In those particular cases I want to know what has been arranged about buildings?—The tenant wants buildings, and we say we are not able to put them up, so that he must do the best he can.

6609. But as regard these two small holders which you say you have lately created, is the tenant left to put up buildings as best he can?—Yes; one case was an enlargement, and so was the other too.

6610. Has the tenant put up buildings?—No. In one case the tenant had buildings, but in the other case he has no buildings, at least not yet, of course the tenancy is only a new one; it was created only about six months ago.

6611. Were you never employed as agent in any part of Scotland or any other country?—Yes, I was in Cambusmore upon Mr. Baillie Hamilton's estate, near Callander.

6612. What were the farms there?—They were mostly large farms; there were a few small ones there too.

6613. Did the landlord put up all the buildings there?—Yes.

6614. Had the small farmers leases?—They had all leases there.

6615. The small farmers?—Not the small farmers, the large farmers had.

6616. The small farmers had not?—No, they had yearly tenancies.

6617. Did the landlord put up all the buildings?—Yes; the buildings belonged to the landlord.

6618. Were there no old buildings of the tenants?—I do not think so.

6619. You have had no experience at all recently in that part of the country?—It is four years since I left there.

6620. Only four years?—Yes.

6621. Then what was the tendency in that part of the country; were small farms being absorbed or being encouraged?—There was not much increase in them while I lived there.

6622. Was there rather an increase or decrease of small farms?—There was no decrease, they remained very much the same.

6623. Was the landlord inclined to encourage small farms?—Yes, I think he was; but he was never asked to do so.

6624. Then there was not a demand there?—No, there was no demand further than those that had them already.

6625. Were there no grieves or superior farm servants, who would be glad to get small farms?—No, there were none that came under my notice.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*.

6626. I think I understood you to say that you were favourable to giving facilities for the increase

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

crease of small holdings through the medium of the local authorities?—Yes.

6627. You would agree, I presume, that it would be necessary that any system adopted should protect the ratepayers from the probability of loss?—Certainly.

6628. Which system do you think would be more likely to secure that object by tenancies or by the ownership proposed, a mere yearly tenancy or a sale under which the holder paid down a fourth or a fifth of the purchase money, or whatever might be resolved upon; which plan do you think would better protect the ratepayers?—There would be more security in the purchase plan.

6629. And do you think that the ratepayers would be likely to adopt any system that, on the face of it, did not afford security from loss; in other words, would they not want to feel secure even from loss before they put any plan into operation?—Yes, I am afraid they would not adopt such a system.

6630. Do you not think that the ratepayers or their representatives, who might be the county council, or district council, would be more likely to adopt the system, whereby the holder was required to pay down something to become the purchaser, than to adopt the system of tenancies?—The security would, of course, be greater.

6631. You say that under the tenancies the holder has, in a large degree, to trust to his landlord for improvements, and such like?—Yes.

6632. Which system would be best for the holder as regards security: that of the purchase we have been speaking of, in which the purchaser was required to pay down a portion, or that of tenancy?—The purchase would be the most secure, unless there were some system of fixity of tenure.

6633. Taking things as they are, do you consider that the holder would be more secure in his improvements, seeing that he would have the right to sell at any time in the open market, than under the system of tenancy?—Certainly.

6634. Then we may take it from you, that both as regards security for ratepayers, and as regards security for the holder, the system of purchase which we have been describing would have advantages over the system of mere tenancies?—So far as security goes.

6635. With regard to buildings, would not the holder be more likely to supply himself with buildings, or endeavour to do so, if the land were his own, than he would be if he were simply a yearly tenant?—No doubt he would.

6636. Supposing that facilities of ownership were offered on the condition of paying down a portion, say one-fourth or one-fifth of the purchase-money, do you think that there would be any number of men in your locality who would endeavour, by saving and by other means, to avail themselves of those facilities?—I do not think there would be a great number; there might be a few. But I find that the notion is the tenancy; they seem quite secure in the tenancies, and the feeling is in favour of them if they had some capital to help them to make a start.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

6637. Will you tell me how many small holdings there are on the estate you manage?—There are five at Clayden, and five down in Derbyshire, on Lady Verney's estate, which I manage too?

6638. That is 10 altogether?—Ten altogether.

6639. What size are they?—They average about 20 acres.

6640. Are the men who occupy those 20-acre farms on those estates able to get a living for themselves and their families on the holdings?—Yes.

6641. What profit, in round figures, should you say that they make per acre on the average; say a man has 10 acres or 20 acres, how much do you think he gets out of it to keep himself and his family?—I should say that he gets about 100 *l.* a year.

6642. What is the class of men who take these holdings?—Industrious labourers.

6643. When they take them, have they any capital whereby they could pay one-fourth of the purchase-money if they had the option of purchase?—I believe some would have; a great many would not, I am afraid.

6644. You think that the greater number would have no capital beyond what was necessary to cultivate the land properly?—No, the greater number, if they paid one-fourth, say, 100 *l.*, would have nothing left to go on with it.

6645. Therefore, out of regard for these men having success on their small holdings, you think it would be unwise to cripple them by making them pay a large sum down at the beginning?—Yes, I do.

6646. And you even go so far as this: you suggested that they should be helped, if possible?—Yes.

6647. That it would make their prosperity on these small holdings more certain?—Yes.

6648. I want to know what is the rate of wages in the district you speak of?—In Claydon it is 14 *s.* a week.

6649. And upon the other estate in Derbyshire?—I think it is a little higher there, 15 *s.* or 16 *s.*

6650. And out of that class of labourer earning from 14 *s.* to 16 *s.* a week, you look forward to the creation of these small holders?—Yes, chiefly.

6651. Have you much demand for these small holdings?—There is not a great demand. I dare say there would be several in Claydon that would take it up.

6652. That is to say, if you had a small holding of 30 or even 20 acres to let, you would have four or five applicants for it?—I think so.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

6653. In what part of Buckinghamshire is Claydon?—It is near Winslow, in North Bucks; it is near Buckingham, seven miles from Buckingham.

6654. What do they do with the small holdings on that estate; do they cultivate them in the ordinary way, the same as farmers do?—Yes, they grow very much the same crops; wheat and beans, potatoes, and turnips.

6655. Is 14 *s.* the highest wages there for the labourers?—

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

labourers?—That is about the average; there are some higher.

6656. And some less, I suppose?—Yes, and some less.

6657. As an estate agent, knowing both classes, both the small holder and the ordinary journeyman labourer, if you had the opportunity of engaging half-a-dozen men for a month or two's work, you would rather have the hired labour of the small holder, or the hired labour of the ordinary journeyman?—I would, as a rule, take the ordinary labourer.

6658. Do you think he would work better than the small holder?—I think so, because he would have nothing to exhaust his energies at home.

6659. Does it occur to you that the fact of having small holdings at all increases the force of character and intelligence of men?—I think so; and, besides the small holder would not require to work for anyone else if he had a holding of 30 acres.

6660. Would be if he had a holding of 20 acres?—Or, even if he had 20 acres of good land.

6661. But the point was whether the fact of having small holdings does or does not increase the intelligence and develope character?—Yes, undoubtedly.

6662. And as a consequence the day's work of a man of that kind would probably be more valuable in its results than a day's work from an ordinary man whom you pick out in the morning and discharge at night?—Certainly much more.

6663. Then would you not think that if provisions were made for small holdings, it would be as well to provide for them down as low as two or three or five acres, and 10 acres, as well as 20 acres?—Yes.

6664. To enable a real labourer to make a beginning?—To begin with, and then to work up to acquire a little capital.

6665. They would increase from four or five acres to 10 acres?—Yes; we have cases of that sort in Claydon, where they began with three or four acres, and increased by degrees till now they hold from 20 to 40 acres.

6666. They commenced in that small way?—Yes.

6667. Are all the small holdings on your estate; are there any small holdings on other estates than yours?—Yes.

6668. It is a system; the custom of the neighbourhood?—There are a few on other estates; I do not know them particularly of course, but I know that there are small holdings on other estates around.

6669. And some of those on your estate have commenced under your special knowledge, and by your arrangement, I suppose?—Yes.

6670. And were they real labourers, or were they small tradesmen?—They were real labourers in the first instance.

6671. Day labourers?—Agricultural labourers.

6672. And have they done well so far?—Yes, as a rule, they have done very well.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6673. You say that a man could live upon 20 acres, cultivating it like an ordinary farmer with

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

wheat, beans, turnips, and potatoes; how many horses would a man keep on a farm of that kind of from 20 to 30 acres?—He would have to plough it; it would not pay to keep a couple of horses.

6674. Do you think that he could advantageously live on so small a farm without outside labour?—Yes, I think he could. Of course there would not be much arable land; ours is a grass district, a pasture district; we look to dairying and stock more than to grain now for revenue.

6675. Would there be employment for an able-bodied man and his family on such a holding?—Yes; he would have a small portion of it arable, as much as would take up his time, and the remainder would be grass.

6676. He would have to hire a horse to plough?—Yes, if he had a great extent of arable land.

6677. I think you said that for regular labour you would prefer an ordinary labourer to a man who has got something to do at home; is there not a great deal of casual labour for which it would be a great advantage to all parties, to the large farmer and to the landlord, to be able to employ these small holders when that extra labour is required, and to the small holder to be able to do that extra labour for the farmer or the landlord?—Yes, it is certainly very handy that they should get casual labour, and they are very willing to do that.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

6678. What rent do they pay on the small holdings per acre?—Twenty-eight shillings per acre is the average.

6679. Is that about the same rent as is paid upon a large farm, say of 400 acres?—It is a little more.

6680. How much more?—A few shillings more.

6681. Five shillings more?—We strike the average at about 22 *s.* or 23 *s.* upon a large farm.

6682. And you get about 28 *s.* on a small farm?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

6683. Sir Harry Verney, I think, lets land to a number of labourers, does he not?—Yes, what they call the Brotherhood Farm.

6684. What size is that farm?—Seventy-two acres.

6685. Is that successful so far?—I am afraid it is not very successful.

6686. I believe that the land was in very bad condition?—Yes.

6687. And the whole trouble and expense of putting it into condition had been thrown upon the men?—Yes; you know Mr. French has been at the back of them; he supplied all the capital.

6688. If the land had been in good condition, do you consider that they would have done better by it?—Yes, certainly.

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Sir *George Campbell.*

6689. How many men were there in the brotherhood?—It was taken up by two in the first instance; two men became the tenants, and they sublet it out to others.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6690. They divided it?—Yes, into half-acre and acre plots.

6691. Into allotments really?—Yes.

Mr. GEORGE JOHNSON, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

6692. WHAT are you?—A small holder.

6693. Have you any other occupation?—I am a retailer of beer, but still I own seven and a-half acres of land.

6694. Do you keep a public-house?—Yes.

6695. Where do you live?—I live just at the outskirts of Long Sutton, one of the southern parishes of Lincolnshire.

6696. How much land do you own?—Seven and a-half acres. There were 7 acres 2 roods and 38 perches in my purchase, but it will take the 38 perches for fences.

6697. You do not then entirely depend upon the land for subsistence; you have this other occupation?—I do not see that it does me any good; I merely keep it because I am contiguous to my land, where I can get a better situation.

6698. What did you pay for the land?—£. 300 was the purchase-money.

6699. And what were the charges?—The lawyer's charge for conveyance was about 15 *l.*, and then there were fines to the lord of the manor; unfortunately this has got some tofts on it, and that costs me 78 *l.* 14 *s.* as fines to the lord of the manor.

6700. Does a toft mean a residence; a house?—There have been two or three houses and some buildings at some time, but they are all gone now; there is not one I can live in, they are all underground.

6701. But the fines are paid upon the number of residences or houses that existed at any period?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

6702. A "toft" means a hearth, does it not?—Yes.

Chairman.

6703. That makes a total cost of 393 *l.* 14 *s.*, does it not?—That is it.

6704. Which is 52 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

6705. How long have you been in possession?—I entered into possession on the 6th January 1885.

6706. What has been the result of your occupation?—Eminently satisfactory.

6707. In the first place, what crops have you got from the land?—My course of cropping is wheat, beans, potatoes, and mangolds. This year I have diverged; I have got an acre of clover; that I have sold.

6708. You do not get much for your wheat, I suppose?—The first year I had it I made 32 *s.* per quarter; the next year 30 *s.*; the next year 27 *s.* 6 *d.*; and last year I made 34 *s.*

6709. What is the yield per acre upon the average?—On an average I have got 48 bushels per acre, taking one year with another. I got above 56 bushels the year before last.

6710. What has been the average expenditure

Chairman.

on the cultivation of the land per acre?—£. 5 11 *s.* 8 *d.*

6711. Does that include the charges for tithe and quit rent?—Yes.

6712. And rates and taxes?—Yes.

6713. Does it include the cost of your own labour?—Yes.

6714. How do you charge your labour?—When I go to work, what I call work, which I cannot do by the piece, I charge the same as the average rate of wages for my own labour; I charge the same as a farmer would give a man. For piece work I do the same.

6715. You endeavour to charge yourself with what you would have to pay an ordinary labourer?—Exactly so.

6716. Do you employ any other labour?—Sometimes.

6717. And in that case do you pay the ordinary wages?—I pay from 3 *d.* to 6 *d.* a day more, as we do not continuously employ them, and they look for a little more in consequence.

6718. You have to give a little more wages, because of its being casual work?—Yes.

6719. After all this expenditure what has been your clear annual profit?—About 5 *l.* 6 *s.* 8 *d.* per acre.

6720. Then you ought to deduct from that a charge for rent, as you are your own owner, ought you not?—Yes, that would leave me, at the ordinary rental of land which the large farmer gives, upwards of 3 *l.* an acre, even then.

6721. It would leave you a clear profit of 3 *l.* 4 *s.* 8 *l.*, that I think is the exact sum, per acre after allowing 2 *l.* 2 *s.* per acre for rent?—Yes, that is right.

6722. I suppose the profits have varied in different years?—Yes.

6723. Is this a statement of the annual profits for the four years for which you have held the land with which you have furnished me?—Yes, I have always kept a creditor and debtor account.

6724. This statement shows that the profit for 1885 was 37 *l.* 3 *s.* 3 *d.*; for 1886, 38 *l.* 17 *s.* 11 *d.*; for 1887, 56 *l.* 1 *s.* 7 *d.*, and for 1888, 27 *l.* 6 *s.* 5 *d.*?—Yes.

6725. The last year has been the worst year, then?—Exactly.

6726. To what do you attribute that?—To the absence of sun, and late harvest; the wheat did not yield so well, and it was a bad potato yield, and I had no beans; the year before I had a very good crop of beans, and did not sow any last year.

6727. You do not think that that depression is going to be permanent?—I trust not. We have a splendid promise this year.

6728. I do not see any entry for sale of straw; what have you done with your straw?—My habit

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Chairman—continued.

habit in dealing with my straw is, if I sell three pounds worth of straw, I directly turn round and buy three pounds worth of manure.

6729. Have you sold the straw?—Having sold the straw, I buy the manure.

6730. How much have you sold?—I sell some every year.

6731. What is the amount of your sales; what do they average?—I do not keep any account of them.

6732. I have it in your brief here, 10 *l.* a year?—I would not take 10 *l.* for my straw this year; I made that in 1887, but I do not keep an account of it, because I turn round and expend it in manure.

Chairman—continued.

6733. Therefore, you have not put it down on either side of the account?—I have not set it down.

6734. Have you put anything down for pigs?—No, they merely clear themselves.

6735. What do you reckon them at?—Some years they lose me money, and some years they get me some.

6736. What do you keep them for?—To make manure, and to eat up the offal.

[*The Witness handed in the following Statement:*—]

TABLE showing ANNUAL PROFITS for the Years 1885 to 1888.

	1885.		1886.		1887.		1888.	
	Expenses.	Sales.	Expenses.	Sales.	Expenses.	Sales.	Expenses.	Sales.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Wheat	—	34 16 –	—	36 10 –	—	37 2 6	—	32 14 6
Mustard	—	16 3 6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Beans and peas	—	23 5 –	—	21 10 –	—	26 15 –	—	1 – –
Potatoes	—	—	—	20 – 2	—	29 10 –	—	32 10 –
Mangolds	—	– 10 –	—	4 7 –	—	4 4 –	—	2 10 –
Chaff and pulse	—	—	—	– 17 6	—	– 15 –	—	1 1 –
Rent, one rood	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 – –
TOTALS	—	74 14 6	—	83 4 8	—	98 6 6	—	70 15 6
Seed – Wheat, Potatoes, Mangolds	5 19 6	—	4 11 –	—	3 18 9	—	9 19 –	—
Horse labour	6 2 6	—	13 7 –	—	12 1 –	—	10 15 6	—
Manual labour	16 4 7	—	15 6 5	—	17 7 11	—	14 2 9	—
Threshing, coal, &c.	3 8 4	—	3 5 3	—	2 8 8	—	2 1 –	—
Tithe	2 10 5	—	3 3 –	—	2 19 –	—	2 18 –	—
Quit-rent	– 10 7	—	– 10 7	—	– 10 7	—	– 10 –	—
Rates	2 7 4	—	3 15 6	—	2 11 –	—	2 14 10	—
Land Tax	– 8 –	—	– 8 –	—	– 8 –	—	– 8 –	—
TOTALS	—	37 11 3	—	44 6 9	—	42 4 11	—	43 9 1
Profit	—	37 3 3	—	38 17 11	—	56 1 7	—	27 6 5

MEM.—The sale of straw has averaged 10 *l.* per annum, which has been expended for manure. I have also kept pigs, which have just paid their way, leaving the manure as a profit for the improvement of the land.

Chairman—continued.

6737. Are there many small owners in your district?—We are pretty well off for small holders. We are highly privileged around Long Sutton and in our parish, I think, with regard to small holders.

6738. How many are there in your neighbourhood?—Twenty-three within a radius of a mile from my house.

6739. How much do they occupy?—About 418 acres altogether.

6740. Do you know what stock is kept on those 418 acres?—Thirty cows at least, and innumerable young heifers and steers.

6741. And I suppose much poultry?—There is a lot of poultry kept.

6742. Any pigs?—Yes.

6743. How many pigs are kept?—It is hard to tell, but there are always at least 100 pigs upon it; some of them buy pigs at market, keep them a few weeks, and then take them to market again and sell them.

Chairman—continued.

6744. About how many horses are employed?—About twenty.

6745. And what labour is employed?—At least 35 men and boys.

6746. Are those chiefly the families of the men who cultivate the holdings?—Yes.

6747. Is the proportion of labour employed there greater than that on the large farms?—Yes, fully 100 per cent. more.

6748. Do you approve of the existence of these small holdings?—Very much.

6749. What you are speaking of now are tenancies, I suppose?—Yes, some of them are owners of the land, like myself, but not above one or two.

6750. I suppose that the existence of this number of people upon the land is good for the tradesmen in the neighbourhood also?—Very good; the tradesmen speak very highly of it, they are beginning to see that it is a great benefit to them.

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Chairman—continued.

6751. What sort of rents do these small tenants pay?—In many cases they pay very heavy rents.

6752. Do they pay more than the big farmers do?—Yes, from 50 to 75 and even 100 per cent. more.

6753. Of what class are these tenants?—They have all sprung from the working classes.

6754. Do they have any other occupation, or do they solely subsist upon the land?—One or two of them deal in pigs, the rest get their living solely off the land.

6755. On the whole are they doing well?—I take it so; 15 out of 22 enlarged their occupations within three years.

6756. The tendency is to increase the extent of the holding?—Exactly.

6757. Is there a great demand for small holdings in your district?—Yes, there is quite a land hunger; many men would like to get upon the land, but it seems looked up.

6758. Is the demand for ownership or for tenancy?—I do not know that exactly.

6759. Which would they prefer, do you think; do they want to be owners or would they be satisfied to be tenants?—I am hardly in a position to answer that, they would like to get on the land, but it is want of capital which prevents them from being owners.

6760. What is the difficulty which prevents them from being tenants?—There seems to be a tendency to make big farms larger instead of encouraging small holdings.

6761. That was the case; but is it still the case?—It is in many instances, I fear.

6762. Are small farms being thrown into large still in your district?—We have only one what we call a large estate in the district, that belongs to Guy's Hospital authorities. The tendency is to throw three farms into one.

6763. On that estate, do you mean?—Yes.

6764. Is there any difficulty in obtaining small tenancies?—Very great difficulty.

6765. The demand is greater than the supply, is it?—A great deal; the tendency on Guy's Hospital estate has been to destroy small holdings during the last few years.

6766. What do you propose yourself to remedy that difficulty, to supply that want?—I should like to see the land unlocked. I think a plan might be devised whereby the State might become the owner and put the men on to the estate; the land never runs away; that would be the safeguard.

6767. In that case the State, or whatever represented the State, would become landlord?—Yes.

6768. You do not propose that the State should sell the land to the small tenants, but should be substituted for the existing landlord;—I do not know that; I think that the rents that some of the small holders pay would pay for the land in 20 or 25 years, according to the excessive rents in proportion to what the farmers pay in the neighbourhood.

6769. You do not propose that the State is to lose by this transaction?—Not a farthing; I do not think they would.

Chairman—continued.

6770. And the State would have to buy the land in the first instance?—Yes, or else empower the local authorities to do so.

6771. The local authoritiy would have to buy the land?—Exactly.

6772. It would have to pay a fair price for it?—Yes.

6773. And would you then propose, if I understand you rightly, that the local authority should let it at a fair rent and always be the landlord, keeping the land itself and having these people as tenants, or would you propose that it should charge a higher rent so that in course of time the tenant might become owner?—I think it might be worked either way.

6774. You would have the choice?—Yes.

6775. In the case where the tenants are to become owners do you propose that they should pay anything down?—That is where the difficulty would come in.

6776. What difficulty; do you mean they would not have the money?—No money in their pockets, I am afraid a good many of them.

6777. I suppose some would have the money in their pockets?—Yes, some would. Others would devise means whereby they could get hold of some money if they could hold the same land by paying a higher rent.

6778. Therefore if these people were able to obtain land by paying down one-fourth of the purchase money, there would be a certain number you think always ready to take advantage of that opportunity?—Yes, I believe so.

6779. They would be the people who have saved money?—Yes.

6780. Or who have good credit and could borrow money?—Yes.

6781. And they would be the most thrifty and industrious?—Yes, no doubt.

6782. Do not you think that those are the people who should be benefited in the first instance?—Yes I do.

6783. Do you think that it would be quite safe to allow persons who have not saved any money at all to enter upon land under these conditions. What security would the local authority have that they would farm the land properly, for instance?—From what I can see going on round about me, the land is in splendid condition; that is a wonderful good safeguard that the man would throw all his energy into it.

6784. But at the present time by natural process it is the best man, the most saving and industrious man, who gets on the land because he is the only man to do it?—Yes.

6785. If your local authority were offering land to everybody, I suppose there would be some chance that some people who took advantage of it would not be thrifty and industrious?—Quite so.

6786. That would not be safe for the ratepayers, would it?—No, it would not.

6787. Would you be satisfied if the advantages offered by the local authority were confined to those persons who could find one-fourth of the purchase money?—That would be the safest plan no doubt; but there are lots of thrifty men who

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Chairman—continued.

who have had large families who will never be able to save money; and it seems rather hard that they should be kept off the land.

6788. But how would you distinguish, otherwise than by some such condition as that, between the class of man who may be safely trusted, and the class of man who may not. Take your own case. You are, I assume, from your evidence, a thrifty man who has saved enough to take your own land, and in addition you keep a public-house, and on both your properties you are rated?—Yes.

6789. You would not like to have to pay more rates, would you in consequence of losses made by the local authority in letting land?—We have a good class of what I call working men in our neighbourhood. The allotments system has been in operation 36 years, and I do not think they have lost a penny of rent.

6790. Does the local authority find the allotments?—They have just begun to do it; it has been private enterprise hitherto.

6791. You mean then that the landlords who have found the allotments have not lost anything?—Yes.

6792. But they are able to pick and choose their tenants?—They seem to take them hereabout as they come.

6793. Would you as a ratepayer be satisfied to allow the local authority at your risk to lend the whole of the purchase-money?—I should not see a deal of fear, not as regards the result of losing money. There are some few odd ones that would not be thrifty; but there are not many small holders that come to grief.

6794. You would not object to lending the whole of the money?—No.

6795. At your risk?—I would rather have the State lend it.

6796. But the risk would be wholly yours; the risk would be wholly the risk of the ratepayers, because although the State might lend the money to the local authority, the State would require to be repaid, and if the local authority was not able to repay it, it would have to raise its rates. That has been proposed in every Bill?—I do not see how they would lose anything, as the land would never depreciate in value under the small holding system, they will put all their energy into it, and make all they can out of the land.

6797. But supposing a man enters upon this land who is not a capable farmer, under his management, under his cultivation, it is quite likely that the land would deteriorate in value instead of increasing in value, is it not?—I have never come across two labourers who have been bad farmers if they have had half an acre.

6798. They must be very good labourers in your district?—They are as a rule.

6799. It would be necessary in order to prevent any risk that they should all be good farmers, would it not?—Yes.

6800. If there were some district less fortunate than yours where some labourers were not capable agriculturists, there would be a good deal of risk about your proposal, would there not?—There might be more in some instances than in others; but I have been among a good many labourers, and round a good many small holdings, and have always found that they worked well.

Chairman—continued.

6801. And you would not mind as a ratepayer lending your money to labourers who have no money of their own, who have not been able to save any, and trusting to their turning out to be good farmers, and increasing the value of the land?—I would not say all of them.

6802. There would be some exceptions?—A few; they would be very rare, but there might be a few.

6803. Supposing that this proposal had been carried out, say 20 or even 10 years ago, the land was worth a great deal more then, was it not?—Yes, it was worth more than it is at the present time.

6804. It was worth in Lincolnshire, I suppose, 50 per cent. more?—Yes; it would be about that time. About 12 years ago it began to fall very considerably.

6805. Supposing that the local authority had bought land then, and was selling it to a labourer, even an industrious capable labourer, at that price, would they not have run very considerable risk if they had advanced the whole of the money, and the land had subsequently fallen in value?—Yes, they would be paying about 5 per cent. of the purchase-money that was bought ten years ago.

6806. That is to say that they would be paying at the rate of 7½ per cent. upon the present value of the land?—Quite that.

6807. Would not that be rather risky; would it not be possible that some of them could not afford that?—I consider that now is a good time to buy land. I think that if the local authority purchase land they would be able to let it cheaper.

6808. Certainly they would now; but if some new competition arose which sent the price of land down still further, there would then be a risk just as there would have been if this transaction had been carried out 12 years ago?—Exactly so; but I do not see a deal of fear of that at the present moment in our district.

6809. You admit that there would be a risk, but you are not afraid to take it yourself?—Not as an individual ratepayer; I would not.

6810. Then if I understand you, your suggestion is that the local authority should buy land, should advance the whole of the purchase-money, and should allow the labourer to become absolute owner after a term of years?—I think it would be advisable.

6811. I think I understood you to prefer the system by which the labourer would become owner at the end of a term of years?—Yes; I think he would put more energy into his work, so that he should become absolute owner.

6812. And the only security you would want would be the land itself, and the probability that the labourer would make the best of it?—Just so.

6813. Do you think that the other ratepayers would share your opinion, and be willing to undertake this risk?—Some of them would, and some would not.

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Chairman—continued.

6814. Do you think, generally speaking, that if the authority were given to local authorities advantage would be taken of it under such circumstances?—No, I do not much approve of the local authorities, having that decision resting with them. They are not good bodies to go to as a rule.

6815. I thought you said all along that it was the local authority that was to do this thing. What authority should do it, do you think then?—What I want to convey as my meaning is that they are the wrong constitution. Our local authorities are constituted of large farmers, and they do not meet this small-holding allotment system with a cheerful spirit at all.

6816. But the county councils are elected by all the ratepayers, are not they?—They are in pretty much of the same composition.

6817. But you cannot go beyond that, can you?—No, not nicely.

6818. You cannot complain of the constitution of the new local authorities, can you. If you complain at all, you are complaining of the majority of the electors, are not you?—We hardly know what the county council will do. They have never had the test of this small-holding allotment system to deal with yet.

6819. That is what I was asking you what you thought the county councils or local authorities elected under this system, which gives every ratepayer a vote, would do; whether you thought they would be willing to risk the money of the ratepayers in such an enterprise as you propose?—Some of the members of the county council would, no doubt; they would not all agree about it; they would not be unanimous.

6820. They would be much more likely to do it, would not they, if the condition was that the labourer or the person coming on to the land was to find a fourth of the purchase-money?—There is no doubt about that.

6821. Because then they would have the security to cover any such risk as I have suggested to you?—That is where the main difficulty steps in, and most of the men would not have that one-fourth to put in.

6822. No; but if the best of them have this new opportunity afforded to them, do not you think that that is perhaps as far as it is safe for the ratepayers to go?—Yes, probably so at present.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

6823. What you mean, I suppose, by helping some of those who have no capital at all, is this, is it, that the fact of the labourer having saved some money is not always a criterion of his value as against another who has not saved money?—Just so.

6824. That is, that a man might be a very industrious and capable man, yet by a series of little misfortunes as well as a large family it has been impossible for him to save money?—Just so. It has been a very difficult thing for a man with a family to accumulate anything.

6825. Yet you knowing him, he living under your observation, you would sooner trust him without capital, than you would trust others with capital?—I would, a steady industrious man. We find as regards the working men occupying

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

these small holdings (the agricultural labourers) that they have been principally farm foremen. There are very few of what I call daily labourers, that have accumulated anything whereby to take land. There is here and there one, but they are very few.

6826. Do you know any other part of the country other than Lincolnshire?—Some portions of the Wisbech Division of Cambridgeshire, and North-west Norfolk.

6827. They are the same class of people there?—Exactly so.

6828. You regard most of the labourers along that part of the country as exceptionally thrifty, do you?—I consider any man is thrifty that lives with a family on 12 *s.* a week.

6829. Then by that rule they are still more thrifty further along Norfolk, where they only get 11 *s.* say, or 10 *s.*?—Yes; some of them do not get that. That is the reason I should like them to have a bit of land, they have not always employment.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

6830. Had you a small holding before you purchased your present occupation?—There are two acres to the house where I reside.

6831. I thought you told the Chairman of the Committee that you purchased this in 1885?—Exactly so.

6832. Previous to 1885, had you a small holding?—I had two acres of land.

6833. And when you had two acres of land had you any occupation?—I went to work as a day labourer. I worked 25 years as an agricultural labourer.

6834. And in the calculation that you gave to the Chairman with reference to the result of your three or four years' farming, did you take into consideration the fact of a horse or a pony that you would have used in your public-house business?—I never mix it.

6835. You have kept it quite separate?—I have kept it an entirely separate account, even taking the corn to market I do.

6836. And as regards the straw that you have sold, to what amount have you generally sold it every year?—I mostly sell about 6 *l.* worth; then I, living close to the town, turn round and buy about 6 *l.* worth of manure; sometimes I "rap" the straw away for so many loads of manure; that is "swap" it away, as we call it.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

6837. You said that the land hunger was very great in your neighbourhood?—Yes, it is among the working men.

6838. Among agricultural labourers; working men?—Exactly so.

6839. Could these men find capital to pay down a fourth of the purchase-money?—I doubt that, they could not in many instances.

6840. They could not find it?—No; there are some few that would be able to find it.

6841. And even if they could find it, they would enter upon the occupation of the land with no money practically to spend on its cultivation?—That is just where the great difficulty would step in again; they would have no money left.

6842. Therefore,

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

6842. Therefore, you would naturally prefer that any money they had saved, should be used by them for the cultivation of their holding when they took to it?—I think it would be better.

6843. Better for the holding?—Yes.

6844. And generally for the success of the scheme?—I think so; that is my opinion.

6845. Still you would like these men to become owners?—Yes.

6846. Then you would prefer some scheme by which they would pay for a term of years a rent above that of agricultural land; that is to say, above the fair rent of the district, so as to become owners at the end of the term?—Yes; that would be my scheme, or a portion of it.

6847. They could do that, you think?—Yes, they are doing that at the present moment; they are paying in excess of the rent of large farmers.

6848. In excess of the rent paid by large farmers; they are paying at the present time sufficient to make them owners of their holdings in a term of 20 or 30 years?—Yes.

6849. And that is the scheme you would recomend for adoption?—Yes; and I think if adopted it would be a success in our immediate neighbourhood.

6850. And do you think it would be a success because it would leave these men with any little capital they possessed for the purpose of making the most of their holdings when they entered upon them?—Just so.

6851. Do you think that plan would be better than a plan by which they would have perpetual leaseholds?—Well, security of tenure is a fine thing; you mean at a fair rent, I suppose?

6852. At a fair rent, with power of selling improvements made. You would prefer the freehold system, I take it?—I should prefer the ownership

6853. Do not you think that if you had local authorities to administer this scheme, probably the best local authorities would be such district councils as may be created in the future?—That is my opinion, or village committees.

6854. Better than larger authorities like the county council?—I would have a committee in every parish, chosen by popular vote.

6855. As the best authority for providing these small holdings?—Yes, that is my opinion.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

6856. You said just now there were 400 acres in small holdings in your district, and that 35 men were employed upon that land?—And boys.

6857. That includes the boys?—Yes.

6858. Are any women employed as well?—The wives go out and do a bit of weeding sometimes, or hoeing, or picking potatoes.

6859. Some women do that?—Yes.

6860. How far off is your market?—The market is a little more than two miles from the furthest of the holdings. I am under a mile.

6861. Do these small holders carry their things to market, or does one man collect the produce?—They carry them to market.

6862. In donkey carts or on foot?—One or two have a light cart, what we might call a market trap; others have heavy carts; some have donkey carts; some have no carts at all. I have not, for one.

6863. Is there much pauperism in your parish?—Yes, a great deal.

6864. Amongst the small holders?—No.

6865. What is the amount of your poor rate?—My poor rate is 2 *s.* in the pound.

6866. What do you attribute the pauperism to, then?—To casual employment.

6867. That is to say, want of constant employment?—There are very few constant labourers. A man that is "constant," when it comes to bad weather, has to stop at home two or three days in the week. I do not call that very constant.

6868. Do any of these small holders get into difficulties and go on the parish?—That is a very rare occurrence. If one of them does he is a very bad farmer; and we do not have any of them.

6869. Do you know any instance of small holders going on the parish?—Not one of those that reside anywhere near me.

Sir *George Campbell.*

6870. I think you said that before you bought these seven acres you had a house with two acres attached to it?—Yes.

6871. Did you own that or was that rented?—Rented.

6872. Are there many holdings of that kind in your part of the country, houses that have got a bit of land attached to them?—These small holders have most of them a little house attached to their holdings.

6873. I mean are there many houses to rent with small plots of land attached?—Not many. This would not be in that position if it was not a public-house.

6874. Then as regards these seven acres of yours, do you cultivate them with spade labour, the wheat, and the beans, and the rest?—No, horse labour.

6875. Do you keep horses?—No.

6876. Do you hire them?—I hire them from other small holders.

6877. Have you to pay the value for that hire?—I pay 9 *s.* a day for a team of horses.

6878. You get a team of horses for 9 *s.* a day?—Yes.

6879. Good-sized horses?—Yes.

6880. And upon that system it is that you find the cultivation result in a profit?—Just so.

6881. Now about these 23 men who hold 418 acres; a good many of them, I suppose, are regular farmers?—There is not one of them has as much as 50 acres.

6882. On about how many acres do you think a man can live with his family in your part of the country without other occupation?—Fifteen, I should say, if he has not an over large family.

6883. Do you think he could live by that without any other occupation?—Yes, at a fair rent; but if a man gives 4 *l.* an acre, which some of those men do, while the large farmer gets his own land at 30 *s.* an acre, there is a wide margin.

6884. Can a man take some casual occupation with 15 acres of land to attend to?—It will take him most of his time if he does it well.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

6885. Have you any time to take casual occupation?—I have very little time to spare myself, with 10 acres.

6886. What I want to ask you is this: If a man with 15, 20, or 30 acres finds it profitable and saves a little money, do you think he would rather increase his holding or take a larger farm?—I do not know whether any of those men would desire to become owners, as small holders, within a radius of a mile of my house. The only thing they complain of is that they have to give so much more rent for their land than the large farmer. There is such a demand for land that they cannot get it under. I do not think they would desire to become owners, which would absorb all their little capital.

6887. If a man had a fair capital and land was available, do you think he would rather enlarge his farm or become a small owner?—These men do keep enlarging. I know two or three instances of the kind I have named. They want more land.

6888. Then there is a greater tendency to become large farmers than to become owners?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

6889. Are the big farmers prosperous in your neighbourhood?—Good farmers are.

6890. Are they as prosperous as the small holders and occupiers?—No, not in the same degree; for this reason: I have no doubt they are prosperous, because they get their land for little or nothing. They have got the landlords on their knees, and can beg the land very near; that is to say, the large farmers can do that.

6891. Then the profit is made by the difference in the rent?—Exactly so.

6892. Are you speaking of the small holdings simply in your own parish, or in the entire neighbourhood?—I could name three or four more parishes that I am conversant with.

6893. Do you know Gedney and Fleet, and all the way up to Spalding?—Yes; all the way up to Spalding.

6894. Are there many holdings of land there?—Yes; I think we are pretty well situated for small holdings in the Spalding division.

6895. Are the small holders equally prosperous there?—Yes, I take it they are. They seem to be doing well. The crops look well.

6896. The Chairman has asked you with regard to the risks which the local authority would run if it purchased an estate on behalf of the small holders; in your judgment would it be safe for the local authority to lease the land to small holders and occupiers?—In my experience it would be safe either way.

6897. Suppose such a thing as this could be done: that the local authority could borrow money at 3 per cent., and let the land at such a figure as to return 4 per cent; should you think that one-third (that is 33 per cent.) on the rental would be a sufficient margin to obviate all risks to the local authority?—Yes, I do; and I believe there would be no difficulty in disposing of the land on those terms, that is to say, letting the land.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

6898. Have you any idea of the value of land in Lincolnshire?—Yes, I believe so.

6899. What do you consider the value of land?—Freehold or copyhold do you mean?

6900. Freehold?—About 50 *l.* an acre now, I should say, in our immediate neighbourhood.

6901. What does that let at for small holdings, without any buildings on it at all?—£. 3 an acre.

6902. Does it easily let at 3 *l.* an acre?—Yes; there is a large demand for it.

6903. Then if the local authority were to buy land at 50 *l.* an acre it would only have to pay 1 *l.* 10 *s.* an acre; that is at the rate of 3 per cent., to the State, and it could let it easily, you say, at 3 *l.* an acre?—Yes.

6904. Therefore there would be a margin of 1 *l.* 10 *s.* per acre. Do you follow me?—Yes.

6905. That is 100 per cent. margin upon the risk which it ran towards the State?—Yes; just so.

6906. You feel sure that that would be an ample margin?—Yes; I could let my own land at 3 *l.* an acre to-morrow.

6907. You could?—Yes.

6908. You spoke of the land being "locked up." Are there any other difficulties with regard to the land; do you find the law expenses and manorial fines any hindrance?—They are very heavy, no doubt. They were in my case. The lawyer who has made my deeds out has a very good reputation as a lawyer, but it seems a good deal of money to part with. The lord of the manor's is the worst imposition, I take it.

6909. And as regards the tenants, even where there are none of these expenses; the hindrance is the high rent?—That is it.

6910. And high assessments?—Very high assessments.

6911. Now, with regard to district councils; why do you consider the district councils would be better authorities to go to than the county councils?—I should prefer every parish managing its own business as regards that; especially small holdings or allotments.

6912. Would they be able to select the men, do you think, with more prudence, knowing them; as they must be better known in the district to them than to the county councils?—There is no doubt about it.

6913. Is that the reason why you would rather trust them than the county councils?—Another reason why I would rather that men elected in their own parish and elected by the popular vote, should have the management of small holdings and allotments is, that there is more likely in that way to be justice done on both sides.

6914. Do you believe that the margin of profit on small holdings is such that it would enable tenants to pay a much greater rent than could be the equivalent of the risk which would be run by the local authority?—I am sure of it.

6915. You are quite sure of that?—Yes.

6916. There are a good many paupers you say in Long Sutton?—Yes, a large number.

6917. To what do you attribute that. You say, as I understand, to the want of constant employment?

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

employment?—I attribute it to casual employment.

6918. Do you think that if they had had small holdings of five, 10 or 15 acres accessible it would have prevented their going to the workhouse?—No doubt it would have stemmed pauperism a great deal.

6919. Do you then believe that there are men in the workhouse who, if they had had small holdings, might have been on the land and earning a living at the present time?—There is no doubt about it.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

6920. Is that the case through the whole union district, or are you speaking simply for your parish?—I find that in Holbeach (that is the union to which Long Sutton belongs) there are frequent complaints on the part of the guardians that there is more pauperism there than in any other parish in the union.

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Friday, 28th June 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Thomas Ellis.
Mr. Chaplin.	Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. James William Low.
Viscount Curzon.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. FREDERICK PUNCHARD, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

6921. You are a Land Agent and Surveyor, I think?—Yes.

6922. You are agent for the Underley Estates, I believe?—Yes, for the Earl of Bective's estates in Westmorland and the adjoining counties.

6923. Have you been professionally engaged for a long time in connection with estates?—I have been 24 years on this estate, and before that I was engaged in the Midland Counties, and also in the Eastern Counties.

6924. Have you considered the subject which has been referred to this Committee?—Yes.

6925. In your experience, has there been any falling off in the number of small holdings?—Yes, in Westmorland there has been a considerable falling off. As to the extent of the falling off, it just depends upon how far you go back; but going back 100 years nearly every owner occupied his own land; and there were a great many very small owners at that time.

6926. You are now speaking of owners?—Yes, owners who were occupiers as well.

6927. We will confine ourselves in the first instance to small proprietors; have you any evidence with regard to them?—Yes; Burns and Nicholson, in their history of Westmorland in 1770, say "every man lives upon his own small tenement, and the practice of accumulating farms hath not here made any considerable progress." There is another historian, who, writing about the Valley of Ravenstonedale and other similar valleys in the county, says this: "Indeed, each valley in those days was isolated and complete in itself. The people grew their own corn, wove their own wool, knit their own stockings, and tanned their own leather; and the remains of various tanneries may be seen to the present day." Upon that I may say I have myself done away with two or three old tanneries which were in existence when I went to Westmorland.

6928. I believe you have particulars as to the number of these owners in certain districts?—To take Ravenstonedale, the valley which has just been referred to, in 1541 there were 188 owners, of whom two held under two acres, 12 under three acres, 22 under four acres, 14 under

Chairman—continued.

five acres, 20 under six acres, 17 under seven acres, 17 under eight acres, and so on; the largest holding being 36 acres.

6929. Where do you get those particulars from?—From the local histories which exist. Those are taken from a history of the particular Valley of Ravenstonedale. In 1734, that is 200 years later, there were 181 owners as against 188.

6930. So that, in the course of that period, there had been very little reduction in the number of owners?—Very little indeed. Then in 1877, there were 74 as against 181; and since then I know that several small places have been offered in the market, and have been bought up by the adjoining owners.

6931. The reduction in the number continues?—It continues.

6932. You have some instances of that, I think, which you could give to the Committee?—Yes. In our own parish of Kirkby-Lonsdale in 1834, according to the tithe award, there were 218 owners, and at present there are 120.

6933. That shows a reduction of nearly one-half?—Yes, of nearly one-half. To take another individual township, in 1869, in New Hutton township, that is only 20 years ago, there were 18 owners and now there are 11.

6934. How do you account for this decline in the number of small owners?—It is chiefly from economical reasons; the owners found that by selling their property, and investing the money elsewhere, they could get a better return for their money. On the other hand, there were a good many natives of the county who had come south and made fortunes, and were anxious to accumulate land in their own county. These were willing to give higher prices and pay down more money than a small owner cared to have invested in his land.

6935. The small owner was tempted by the high price of land to part with it, and invest his capital in other occupations?—Yes.

6936. Now who have been the purchasers in the case of these small holdings?—There have been several large purchasers. Of course, the largest one in this particular district is Lord Bective.

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Chairman—continued.

tive for whom I act. I believe that the whole of his 25,000 acres have been bought within the last 50 years.

6937. I understand that his estate has been made up largely of these previously existing small ownerships?—Yes, the estate has been made up from 220 different purchases all within the last 50 years.

6938. What effect has this had upon the home production;—I think myself that the district, and agriculture generally, is benefited by it, for this reason, that these large capitalists who formed these large estates have been able to afford, and willing to afford, to spend their money in improving the land and improving the farms for a very small return of interest.

6939. But contrasting the small ownerships which remain with the large farms, which have been formed out of the small ownerships, which, in your opinion, gives the largest production per acre?—I think a large farm under a wealthy landlord who provides all the necessary buildings and does all the draining and necessary improvements.

6940. Do you think that the output of these larger farms is in value greater than that of small ones in proportion to the size?—Yes, I should say so generally. There may be individual cases in which a small owner may produce more; but then it is because of certain happy circumstances which enable him to do it.

6941. Has the depression in agriculture had any effect in reducing the number of small owners?—I do not know that it has affected the number of owners. It has affected the rents; but I do not think that it has forced the land into the market any more. In fact, most of the sales took place more than 10 or 12 years ago, before the depression began.

6942. In the neighbourhood of the estate with which you are concerned, do you find any difficulty in letting large farms?—No; I have no difficulty at all. We have never been without applicants for a farm, if we wished to let it.

6943. We have had evidence from other witnesses to the effect that this consolidation of farms went on till recently; but that recently the practice has been rather in the other direction, and that owners have found it to their advantage to divide their farms?—Perhaps that evidence is from districts where the farms are very much larger than in Westmorland. Our farms generally are small even now.

6944. What is the average size of the farm?—We have a great many between 25 and 50 acres, and a great many between 50 and 75 acres.

6945. You would call those small holdings or small tenancies, would you not?—It depends upon what is meant by a "holding." I mean by a small farm a farm which requires the whole of the man's time.

6946. You mean a farm which a man is able to work himself, with his family, without extraneous labour?—Yes.

6947. Are those farms accompanied by any pasture land, or hill land, or sheep runs?—In the neighbourhood of the "Fells" (as the hills or mountains are there called) they are; and of course so in the case of open commons. A good many

Chairman—continued.

of the commons were inclosed 60 or 70 years ago; but some open ones still remain in certain parts of the county.

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6948. Are there a great number of farms from 25 to 50 and 50 to 75 acres, without any sheep-walks attached to them?—Most of these small farms have sheep-walks attached.

Chairman.

6949. Do these small owners invariably occupy their own holdings?—They do not now. Up to about 60 years ago they occupied their own properties; but they have not done so within the last half a century, as a rule.

6950. They have gone away, and became landlords letting to others?—Yes.

6951. Have you any other reason to give for the sale of these holdings by the owners who have gone out, besides the temptation offered by the high prices?—No. I think that really was the chief cause, and might almost be said to be the only cause. Of course their estates were mortgaged; and they found that the interest upon the mortgages amounted very often to more than the rent; they had to borrow at, say, 4 per cent., or 5 per cent., as it was in those days; and if they were getting only 2½ or 3 per cent. they were very glad of course to sell their land.

6952. I suppose where a small owner sold his land it almost invariably fell into the hands of a large owner?—Yes, almost invariably.

6953. There was no competition on the part of other small owners to supply the place of those who went away?—Not beyond a certain price. There were always plenty ready to go up to a certain price; but the larger owner was ready to give more.

6954. Has there been any change in the system of farming?—Yes; at the time I speak of, up to about 1820, the farming in this district was chiefly arable. Now it is nearly all pasture; I think that eight-tenths of the land is in pasture now. That change occurred when corn came down so much in price.

6955. Has that had any effect upon the existence of small owners?—Yes, they were driven to erect additional buildings, and it was the cost of the buildings that was the first stumbling block.

6956. What did they require those additional buildings for?—For the extra stock which was kept through the winter.

6957. So that in order to work according to the modern prevailing system, it would be necessary for them to expend capital in buildings?—Yes.

6958. And they had not got spare capital to spend?—No.

6959. So that this cause also contributed to their readiness to sell their holdings?—Yes.

6960. With regard to these small owners who have been bought up, had they been long on the land before they were bought up?—Some of them had been. I have a few instances here of the intervals at which properties have been sold, and I will give two or three instances if the Committee wish. One property, for instance,

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Chairman—continued.

changed at intervals of 21 years, 73 years, and 129 years; and another one at intervals of 11, 23, 63, and 29 years.

6961. That is the number of years, as I understand, during which particular owners held the same property?—Yes, the original owners or their descendants. In another case the intervals were 89, 42, and 82 years; and in one case the land remained in the same family for 178 years. But as a rule I find that the smaller the estates the more frequently the changes of ownership, and *vice versâ*.

6962. Were these owners much burdened with mortgages?—Yes, out of 148 cases that I was able to trace, in 40 per cent. the mortgagees joined in the conveyances, showing that at any rate that number were mortgaged; and it is quite possible that there were charges upon the remainder which were not of course shown in the title-deeds, so that I am unable to get at them.

6963. Have you any idea what was the object of these mortgages; do you know whether the money was required for family dispositions, or required for improvements upon the farm?—It is nearly always for family charges.

6964. This gradual absorption of small owners you attribute entirely to economic causes, as I understand?—Yes, almost entirely.

6965. You do not think that the absorption has been due to legislation?—No.

6966. In what condition were those properties at the time they were absorbed?—Generally speaking, the buildings were in a very bad condition and drainage was very much needed, and the fences were very bad also; in fact as a rule they were in a very bad condition, especially the smaller farms.

6967. A large expenditure was required to put them into a proper condition?—Yes.

6968. Has that expenditure been made by the present owners?—Yes, I have the figures here with regard to Lord Bective's property. Lord Bective has during the 24 years I have referred to spent in new buildings 50,000 *l.*; in drainage 15,000 *l.*; in fences 7,500 *l.*; and in roads, 4,000 *l.*; and in machinery, river embankments, and water supplies 7,500 *l.*, that is a total of 84,000 *l.*, in addition to a sum of 90,000 *l.* spent in ordinary repairs, and alterations of buildings, and so on.

6969. That is to say, he has spent 84,000 *l.* for additional permanent improvements in 24 years?—Yes.

6970. Is there any satisfactory return upon this outlay?—I am, unfortunately, unable to trace very many of the farms owing to the numerous alterations of boundaries and other dealings with the land, in the way of planting, and so on; so that I am not able to say how much the present rental represents in the way of interest upon the outlay; but I have traced a few cases, and my own opinion is that, looking at the present rent, it would only be one per cent. upon the capital outlay.

6971. You think that one per cent. upon the capital outlay is all the return that the landlord obtains?—Yes, from the present rent.

6972. Has there been any reduction of rents recently?—There has been a reduction of 10 to 15 per cent. during the last 15 years. It began, first of all, with the interest on improvements which had been added, being thrown off. That was the beginning, and since then there has been further reductions in certain cases.

Chairman—continued.

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6973. Does the 15 per cent. include the interest upon that outlay?—Yes.

Chairman.

6974. It is doubtful, then, whether the landlords get any return at all upon the capital expenditure which they have made in order to improve the land?—I do not think they do. I am quite certain that if they had invested the money in Consols, or in some other way, and had left the estates as they were, they would have a better income at the present moment than they have after having made the improvements.

6975. When a landlord spends money in this way, does he go about it expensively?—No, we have avoided that. We have simply put up permanent and substantial buildings, but not extravagant ones; nor have we spent any money in architectural features at all; they are plain substantial buildings.

6976. Supposing that tenants had made these improvements, or any substitute for them, would they be likely to have put them up as durable buildings?—I think so. They might not perhaps have made them quite so large; they might have made them smaller; but I do not think they could have put them up any less substantially if they were to last any time.

6977. You think, as I understand, that in any case this expenditure would have been necessary whoever held the land?—Yes, there is no doubt about it; but I do not say that it would have been so much.

6978. What has happened in the case of the small owners who have remained on the land; have they made improvements?—No, they have just held on as long as they possibly could without expending money, and their estates still keep coming into the market.

6979. How are they doing, as a rule; are they getting a fair subsistence?—They make an existence; that is about all. Those who sold their farms and have gone into trade have done very much better.

6980. Your view is that, in any case, a very considerable expenditure would have been necessary; and, as I understand, this can only be provided by the landlord?—Yes.

6981. I suppose that sanitary improvements are required, and have been executed by the landlords?—Yes; the Sanitary Acts have added very much to our expenditure.

6982. Does the amalgamation which has taken place reduce the expenditure?—Yes, it is cheaper to make three little farms into one, because there is then only one house required, and less buildings required.

6983. In cases of that kind what has become of the previously existing cottages or houses?—In a few cases they have been made into cottages; but, as a rule, they have been pulled down, and altogether removed.

6984. Therefore, if for any reason the landlord wishes to subdivide his estate again, he would have

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Chairman—continued.

have renewed expenditure for providing those buildings which have been destroyed?—Yes.

6985. That, I suppose, stands in the way of sub-division?—It does; and that is what has led us to throw farms together rather than subdivide.

6986. I gather from your evidence that on the whole you are not disposed to think that this process has been injurious?—I think it has not. I think that the trade of the district has been benefited; and I think that the occupiers of the land have been benefited also.

6987. But on the other hand, taking the case of one of those districts to which you referred, you told us that the number of occupiers had been reduced by one half?—Yes.

6988. Does not that mean that the population of the district has been reduced?—Yes, it is so.

6989. And that the amount of labour employed has been reduced?—Yes.

6990. Does not the trade of the district suffer in consequence of that?—No; there is no trade in the rural district to demand these men's labour; they are obliged to go out of the district to get their living.

6991. But at the time when these people were living on their own land there must have been a considerable number of village tradesmen to provide these men with some of the articles which they could not supply themselves?—Yes.

6992. At the present time I suppose the small owner buys tea, coffee, clothes, and things of that kind, which he cannot supply upon the farm?—Yes; but he goes to the towns for them.

6993. Then the migration of half the population must surely have diminished the local trade of the district?—It is all gone into the towns; it has benefited the towns.

6994. But has it injured the country?—It has injured the country in that respect.

6995. I am considering only its effect upon the country; it would be another question what its effect upon the towns was?—What I meant was that supposing these properties had remained in the hands of small owners, and those owners had not incurred this expenditure, the carpenters, masons, and others engaged in building would not have had so much employment as they have had under a wealthy proprietor.

6996. Supposing instead of these properties being bought by a large owner they had been bought by a person coming forward with fresh capital to take the place of the small owner, in that case the number of the inhabitants would have remained at the higher figure, and the trade of the country would have been benefited; there would have been more people living upon the land, and more people living out of the land?—Yes; but a small owner cannot afford to put up with the small rate of interest that the wealthy man does. The wealthy man buys when the land is paying 2 or 2½ per cent., and the small owner could not afford to buy at that rate.

6997. And therefore, as long as the large owner was willing to pay a higher price than the small owner, he, of course, had the advantage in competition?—Yes.

6998. But if, by any cause, very much larger quantities of land continually came into the market, the demand of the large owners might

Chairman—continued.

have been supplied; and then the small owners would have been left to make the best terms they could for the remainder; is not that so?—I do not quite follow you.

6999. Taking your particular district, suppose, in the course of the last 50 years, that 100,000 acres have been sold; that has been all or nearly all bought up by large owners, as I understand; but supposing, instead of 100,000 acres coming into the market, owing to other causes which do not at present operate, 200,000 acres had come into the market, it is possible, is it not, that the demand of the large owners would have been satisfied with less than that quantity, and they would not have been able to buy the whole 200,000 acres?—I think that there would have been other capitalists come to buy it.

7000. You think that whatever the amount of land would have been, all of it would have been bought by capitalists?—Yes.

7001. And that there would have been no land left to ordinary competition among small owners?—I think not; certainly no more than there is at present.

7002. Under our present system of settlement the continuance of large estates in a single family has been promoted, has it not?—Yes.

7003. Supposing that system had not existed, very much larger quantities of land would, from time to time, have come into the market; would not that be so?—I am not quite sure whether it would. You will remember that there is power to sell now.

7004. I am not speaking of very recent legislation, but of the last 50 or 100 years, during which a strict system of settlement has existed. That system has tended, and was intended to promote the continuance of large estates in the hands of single families?—Yes.

7005. Supposing that system had not been in existence, I presume very much larger quantities of land would from time to time have come into the open market; would not the effect of that have been that small owners would have had a chance to purchase this land upon fair terms?—No doubt they would have had a better chance than they have had; but still I think that the large capitalists would always have kept the others out of the market.

7006. The reduction in the number of these small owners tends to reduce the number of owners of land in the district, does not it?—Yes.

7007. And if that process continues, as it is still continuing, there will be very few owners of land, and they will hold very large masses of land?—Yes.

7008. Do you think that that is a safe condition of things?—No. I confess myself I would much rather see a large number of small owners dotted about the country.

7009. Do you not think that upon social and political grounds it would be very desirable to have ownerships of all sizes, and a very much larger number of them?—There is no doubt about that.

7010. Do you not think that the ownership of land by very few people tends to promote discontent and attacks upon property?—I have no doubt it does.

7011. Therefore you would think it desirable

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Chairman—continued.

in the interests of owners of land, as well as of the nation generally, that if possible, small ownerships should be maintained?—Yes, and speaking for the large owners, I should say they would only be too glad to see a lot of these small freeholders dotted about the country.

7012. In spite, therefore, of what you have told us about the impossibility of these small owners finding easily all the capital required for improvements, you would still think that it was desirable, upon other grounds, to maintain small ownerships, if possible?—Yes, if possible, certainly.

7013. Do you think there is any way in which the Legislature can promote the re-creation of small ownerships where they have disappeared?—They may re-create them; but the fear I have is that we shall get back to the old state of things. Supposing that you re-instate such small owners by any legislation, as soon as those owners have power to sell, they will sell again to larger men. A larger man can afford to give a higher rate than a small man can.

7014. Let me put this to you: suppose that a man wants a small holding in your district, would he not find considerable difficulty in obtaining it?—Yes.

7015. Therefore the state of things is this, that certain economic causes to which you have referred, lead a proportion of smaller owners every year to sell and to disappear?—Yes.

7016. On the other hand, no reverse process is going on, and if they wanted to come back they would find great difficulty in doing so?—Yes, it is so.

7017. It is like passing through a gate which closed after them, and through which they cannot re-enter; once they have ceased to be small owners, it is difficult for them to become small owners again?—Yes.

7018. Would it not be advisable, having regard to what you have told us already about the social and political advantages, to make it easy for those people to become owners again if they desired it?—Yes.

7019. Even although there would be a constant waste of them, so to speak; that is, a constant reduction in the existing number; that is, in fact, only a reason why a variety of facilities should be given for an increase which might correspond with the natural diminution?—Yes; I believe all the large landowners would be very glad indeed to see that brought about.

7020. It would not matter, I suppose, so far as the political considerations to which you have referred, are concerned, whether these small holdings remained continually in the hands of the same family, or were constantly changing hands, provided they were always occupied by small owners?—Quite so.

7021. Then the fact that if facilities were offered there would still be a tendency for the persons who took advantage of them ultimately to go out again; that would not be areas on against offering those facilities, would it?—No, I do not think it is any reason at all against offering the facilities.

7022. Have you considered what kind of facilities might be offered by the State, and in what way the State could, on national grounds,

Chairman—continued.

promote the creation of small ownerships?—Yes, I have thought the subject over, and I confess myself that I should prefer, what is called the system of the Ashbourne Act to any other scheme; I believe that that would be a much more popular Act than the Small Holdings scheme.

7023. You think that would be more popular than the Small Holdings Bill which is before the House of Commons?—Yes.

7024. In what way would the Ashbourne Act be more popular than the Small Holdings Bill?—Because the owner would feel that he was gradually becoming absolute owner, and he would be free from the restrictions under the local authority.

7025. You think that the restrictions, which under the proposals of Mr. Collings' Bill the local authority would be required to see observed would be unpopular; that is to say, restrictions against subdivision and subletting?—Yes; and also the fact that the holders do not become absolute owners.

7026. You think that the sentiment of ownership would weigh with intending purchasers?—Yes, certainly.

7027. And that the people who wanted land would be more likely to take advantage of an offer which, in the course of 40 or 50 years, made them absolute owners, than of an offer which merely advanced them money, and required a permanent quit-rent from them?—Yes, I have a very strong feeling on that score.

7028. Do you think that they would object to that quit-rent, if it were a small one?—I think in the course of time they would get to look upon it as a burden, and they would object to it much in the same way as they do to tithe and so on. Then there is another thing: supposing this scheme had been in operation 15 years ago, and the rent-charge was fixed upon the then selling or letting value of the land, at the present moment the rent-charge would be far more than the annual value of the land.

7029. A fair rent-charge upon the value of land 15 years ago would be more than the rack-rent now?—Yes.

7030. But as I pointed out to you, that would not be the case, would it, if the quit-rent formed only a very small proportion?—Of course it would not in that case. I was referring to the scheme in the Bill in which three-fourths of the purchase-money is to remain a permanent charge.

7031. The objection which you have now taken would apply equally to the Ashbourne Act, would it not?—Only as long as the repayment of the money goes on, that ceases in the course of time.

7032. It would go on for 50 years?—Yes.

7033. Therefore, supposing the land had been bought under the Ashbourne Act 15 years ago, the annual payment for rent and the instalments would be undoubtedly more than the rack-rent now?—Yes, no doubt.

7034. Because I suppose land has fallen a great deal more than that?—It has fallen from 10 to 15 per cent. in my neighbourhood, and in other parts of the country it has fallen, say, 30 per cent.

7035. In some parts of the country it has fallen 50 per cent., has it not?—I believe so.

7036. That

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Chairman—continued.

7036. That objection, which you have mentioned, would apply to any scheme of purchase, if the value of the land went down after the purchase was completed?—Yes, but there is this difference, in the case of the Ashbourne Act, that there is a feeling that in the course of time the rent-charge ceases, whereas under the scheme of the Small Holdings Bill, it continues; it never gets less and never runs out.

7037. Even though the payment extended over 50 years you think that the hope of being absolutely free from it would help the man through the bad times?—Yes.

7038. Have you considered at all whether it would be advisable for the State to lend money through the local authorities for the purpose of creating small farms?—Do you mean under the scheme of the Small Holdings Bill?

7039. I am not confining the question to that Bill. The Small Holdings Bill proposes to create small owners subject to a permanent quit-rent; but I daresay you are acquainted with the Allotments Bill?—Yes.

7040. The Allotments Bill enables local authorities to buy land, and to let it out to ordinary tenants in small quantities?—Yes.

7041. Supposing that the principle of that Bill were applied to a greater extent, and that, instead of being confined to one-acre tenancies, it were raised to tenancies of 10 or 20 acres, would you be in favour of it?—Then you raise a new question altogether, because I take it that one essential element of success in the Allotment Scheme is that the labourer is enabled to work his land during his spare time; he does not forfeit any wages, and he does not give up any employment to work that land. But when you get beyond that, and a man has to give up a portion of his regular wages and employment, you open up a new question, and it becomes doubtful whether he can make better use of his time by managing the land than by continuing in his employment; that is a different question.

7042. Under the proposal that I am putting to you, the man would become a small farmer, and the only difference would be that his landlord would be the local authority, instead of a private landlord. I may say that the only object of such a scheme, of course, would be to secure that the man should have an opportunity of taking a small farm, if he wanted it; it would only be necessary to apply the scheme in cases where that opportunity was not afforded to the men by landlords at present; what do you say to such a scheme?—I do not think you would get local authorities to undertake that.

7043. I am afraid not; certainly not the small local authorities. They would be afraid of the risk, you think?—Yes, they would be afraid of the risk.

7044. But you would not see any objection to the local authorities undertaking the scheme under the Ashbourne Act?—No, I should not.

7045. They would then, I suppose, buy the land and distribute it among the small occupiers, who would have to pay annual instalments and become absolute owners at the end of 40 or 50 years?—Yes; they would not have quite the same objection to that, although I should be doubtful whether the small local authorities, small

Chairman—continued.

local boards, and sanitary boards, for instance, would enter into it at all. It is possible that the larger ones, the County Councils and so on, might do so, because they would take a broader view of the question than the smaller authorities would.

7046. What would be the reasons which would prevent, say, the district councils, such as has been proposed, from dealing with a scheme of this kind; why should they object to deal with it?—There is the risk, first of all, and there is the question of success; and then there is a certain amount of jealousy when you are proposing to lend money to small tradesmen, and charge it on the rates; you must bear in mind that the members of local authorities are tradesmen themselves, possibly in the same line of trade that these men who want to take the land are, and they would not be willing, I think, to risk increasing their own rates to benefit their smaller fellow tradesmen.

7047. You mean that A, B, and C being all in the same position, A and B would not lend money on the rates to benefit C unless they wanted a share in it themselves?—Yes, that is my opinion.

7048. In the case of the Ashbourne Act, the local authority would derive no profit from the transaction, would it?—No.

7049. That is to say the interest and instalments would be calculated so as exactly to leave the capital at the end of 40 years with interest?—Yes.

7050. Therefore the local authority would, under no circumstances, make any profit?—No.

7051. But, under Mr. Collings' proposal, although the local authority would make no profit for a term of 40 or 50 years, yet at the end of that time it would have its profit upon the whole transaction; an absolute right to a permanent quit-rent; do you follow me?—I do not quite understand when they would get the permanent rent.

7052. Mr. Collings proposes that the person entering upon the land bought by the local authority should pay down one-fourth of the purchase money, and the remaining three-fourths shall be a loan which is to bear a perpetual interest; but that interest is to be fixed at such a rate as to enable the local authority to pay it off in 50 years, so that at the end of 50 years, although the local authority would continue to receive the rent, it would have paid off the whole of the loan to the State?—I did not notice that in the Bill.

7053. Under those circumstances, the local authority, acting in the interests of the ratepayers, would have a distinct advantage in view, would they not?—I think they would help their own generation before they would think of their grandsons.

7054. You think that the advantage is too distant to have a material effect?—Yes, the advantage is too distant for the guardians of the rates; it is not too distant for the person who is acquiring the land. I make a distinction between the local authority and the purchaser, and I say that 50 years is not too distant a time for a man who expects in that time to become absolute owner of his estate; but it is too distant for the members of a local authority, because they pay the present rates, and they will not get any benefit at the termination of the rent-charge 50 years hence.

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Chairman—continued.

In fact, they would say, why should we go and burden our rates to benefit the owner 50 years hence? It would not benefit them, because it must be remembered that a great many of the members of local authorities are mere ratepayers and not owners. They would say, if we are going to benefit the rates 50 years hence we shall have to do it out of our pockets.

7055. Their feeling, you think, would be, We shall have all the risk, and the landowners 50 years hence will have the profit?—Yes.

7056. Therefore the fact that the local authority as such would derive a profit 50 years hence would, in your opinion, have no weight with the present members of that authority?—Not a bit.

7057. Supposing that the Ashbourne Act were applied to England, and the Government were willing to lend money to enable tenants or other persons to become owners of small plots of land, do you think that there would be any demand for land on those conditions in your district?—No, I do not think there would, because, to begin with, the local authority would have to buy at the present rate of value, whatever it may be. I think that rate is such as would not encourage a wish on the part of a small man to buy.

7058. You think that the interest and instalments upon the present fair value of the land would constitute too high a rent for a small man to pay?—Yes, he would find that he would do better with his money elsewhere.

7059. If he wanted a small farm, apparently in your neighbourhood, he can get a small farm to rent?—He can rent a small farm.

7060. And as compared with renting a farm, you think he would be worse off if he bought under those conditions?—Yes.

7061. That is to say, supposing a man were to buy 20 acres of land under the Ashbourne Act his interest and instalment would be much more than the rent he would have to pay for a small farm to a landlord?—Yes, he would be far better as a renting tenant, so far as the annual payment goes.

7062. I gather that you do not think that the temptation to be absolute owner, and to get rid of all restrictions upon cultivation, and all interference by his landlord would weigh with the man, in comparison with the increased rent that he would have to pay?—I do not think it would.

7063. Supposing that the local authority were to buy the land for this purpose, do you think it would be satisfied to let it again without any profit?—No, I am sure it would not.

7064. You think it would always be inclined to put the land up to competition?—It would let or sell it to the highest bidder, quite irrespective of who or what he might be, whether he was a small capitalist or a wealthy man.

7065. It might therefore happen that unless the local authority were confined by statutory provisions, having bought the land, it would be tempted to let or sell it to large owners?—There is no doubt it would; it might buy it from one large owner and sell to another.

7066. Assuming that the local authority was unable to do that; that is to say, that it was compelled to let or to sell the land to persons who would undertake to cultivate it themselves, do you think it would still put the land up to competition?—Yes; because they do so now with the land that belongs to them. For instance, I will take a local authority close by this estate I have to do with, which has owned land for a great many years; it has occasionally sold and occasionally let that land, but it has always been by auction to the highest bidder.

7067. Supposing that a local authority had carried out this transaction, and had bought land and had either sold or let it to small tenants, and supposing that agricultural depression made it impossible for the small tenants to pay the rents demanded, what do you think would be the action of the local authority under those circumstances?—I do not know at all. They would not be able to help the small owners, or the purchasers, whoever they might be.

7068. Do you think they would be as considerate as a private landlord?—They could not do it because they would at once say, we quite sympathise with you but in justice to ourselves and the other ratepayers we cannot afford to do it.

7069. I think that, summing up your evidence upon this part of the question, you are distinctly in favour of the maintenance and, if possible, the increase of small ownerships?—Yes, decidedly.

7070. But you think that the only way in which the State can assist that object is by some extension of the Ashbourne Act?—Yes.

7071. And you are not very hopeful, as I understand, that even if the State were to consent to such an experiment it would be very successful?—No, I think we should get back again to the present state of affairs 30 or 40 years hence.

7072. So that although you are anxious for this increase of small ownerships, you are not very hopeful that it can be accomplished?—No; I am afraid that the history of Westmorland would repeat itself.

7073. Of course your evidence applies to your experience of your own district, and not necessarily to other parts of the country?—Yes.

7074. Have you anything to tell us about glebe estates?—There are several small glebe estates in the district. In those cases you have an instance of a poor owner unable to afford any improvement, and the result is that these farms are not in a state for the tenants to make the best of them; they are not in a state in which one would like to see buildings and farms generally throughout the country. I do not think they encourage the idea of having poor owners at all.

7075. They are illustrations of the unsatisfactory results of small ownerships, where the owners have no capital?—Yes.

7076. Have you considered the question of small occupations as distinct from ownership?—Yes. Of course there are two or three points in which the question of small occupation is distinct from that of ownership; first of all the profit has to be more immediate and has to be realised in money, whilst, as you know, many considerations which induce a man to become a large landowner cannot be represented in money, but there are other considerations which come in.

7077. In

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Chairman—continued.

7077. In the case of a small tenant you say he is animated solely by commercial considerations?—Yes, he must have his profit in money.

7078. On the other hand, a small tenant does not of course require the capital which a small owner would require?—Quite so. Of course he can rent more land than he can own.

7079. You think that capital which is employed in stocking the farm would give a better return than capital employed in buying the farm?—Yes.

7080. Therefore it is more easy and more profitable for a small man, in your opinion, to become a tenant than to become an owner?—Yes, certainly.

7081. Do you think that small tenancies can be made to pay?—They do manage to make a living on our small farms; that is to say, where the farms are just sufficiently large to engage the man's time and his capital.

7081*. There seem to be a good number of these small farmers in your district?—Yes.

7082. Do you think, on the whole, that these small farmers, in your district, have done better or worse than the large farmers?—I think they have done as well as the large farmers; I do not know that they have done either better or worse. We find that the small men pay rent quite as well as the larger ones.

7083. Do the small farms produce more in proportion than the large ones?—No. We do not find it so, unless, as I said, you take an exceptional case. A butcher, for instance, will improve his land more than, perhaps, a man in any other trade, simply because he has the means of doing so, but the smaller farmer does not produce more as a rule.

7084. In your experience, does the small farmer put more labour on to his land?—He puts more labour on to it, but he does not put so much manure on to it, and I do not think that labour is much use without manure.

7085. I suppose there is a limit to the profitable production of land?—To profitable production there is a limit, undoubtedly. I maintain that land will only return a profit up to a certain point. You may double or treble its production, but it does not follow that that is at a profit.

7086. Have you got any cases where small farms are held as adjuncts to other occupations by small tradesmen?—Yes, we have several upon our estate. I could give you the details of our holdings. We have at present 19 holdings under five acres, and of these 19, two are held as poultry farms (I may say rather, prize poultry farms), six are held as accommodation land by professional gentlemen, doctors, and so on; six others by tradesmen, that is, by such as butchers, millers, and carriers; one is let with a large house, and four others are let to farms not belonging to the estate. Then of holdings between five and 10 acres, there are 14, of which one is accommodation land let to a professional gentleman; seven are let to tradesmen; two let with large houses; and three to other farms, and one is let as a cricket field. Then of holdings between 10 and 15 acres, there are 16; of which one is let for a poultry farm; 10 are let to tradesmen; two are let to large houses; two are let to farms not belonging to the estate; and one is a small farm

Chairman—continued.

of itself; that is occupied by a retired farmer. Then of holdings between 15 and 20 acres, there are seven; of which two are let to tradesmen; one with a large house; two others are let to farms not belonging to the estate, and two for small farms. Of holdings between 20 and 25 acres, there are two only; one is let as a poultry farm, and the other is let to a miller. Of holdings between 25 and 30 acres, there are 23; five are let to tradesmen; eight to occupiers of other farms; and 10 as small farms. Then of holdings between 50 and 75 acres, there are 21; I have not the details of those holdings. Between 75 and 100 acres, there are 11 holdings; between 100 and 150, there are 36 holdings; between 150 and 200, there are 17 holdings; between 200 and 250 there are 10, and above 250 there are 18. That is a total of 194, of which 49 are under 15 acres, and 32 more are under 50 acres.

7087. Many of these small holdings are held by tradesmen, I understand?—Yes.

7088. I suppose that in those cases other than economical considerations come in?—Yes. They would be wheelwrights, or millers, or butchers, or in other trades.

7089. Their experience perhaps hardly offers any guide to what would be the result of creating small holdings for purely agricultural purposes?—No; it merely shows that the local demand is supplied so far as we are able to do it; and I may say that if there was any more demand we should meet it.

7090. In these cases are the farms in close proximity to towns and markets?—Yes, in most cases. The small holdings in country districts are held by millers chiefly; small corn millers who have mills in connection with the land. In close proximity to towns, they would be held by butchers and hotel-keepers, and men of that class.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7091. Are there a great many corn millers who have small holdings?—Not a great many; there would be, perhaps, seven or eight upon the estate.

Chairman.

7092. I think you have already told the Committee, with regard to these small occupations, you do not think that in that case the State can do anything to promote them; they must be left to the ordinary laws of supply and demand?—They must be left to the laws of supply and demand.

7093. At the present time the tendency in your neighbourhood, as I understand, is towards reduction in number both of small ownerships and small tenancies?—Yes. What I call small farms (that is, farms of from 15 to 50 acres) are rapidly disappearing; I mean small farms in which the occupier is expected to fill up his time elsewhere.

7094. Why is it that those small farmers are disappearing?—Because such a man could not get employment for his spare time. The time that he could spare from his land was the time when the other farmers did not want him; and on the other hand, the time when he was employed on his farm was just the time when his neighbours wanted him.

 7095. I think

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Mr. *Chaplin.*

7095. I think you said that the farms in your district, which were formerly arable, have now become mainly pasture?—Yes.

7096. That you account for by the reduced price of corn?—Yes; and on the other hand the increased demand for meat and wool, and so on.

7097. The number of occupiers in consequence is reduced practically by one-half, I think you said in one case?—Yes, the number of occupiers is reduced very much.

7098. And the labour employed is greatly reduced?—Yes, certainly.

7099. I think you said that in the locality trade had suffered, and there was much less custom for the tradesmen?—From the loss of occupiers, of course, that would be so.

7100. You would trace all this ultimately, therefore, to the reduced price of corn?—Yes; it follows upon that.

7101. That is one of the disadvantages of the fall in prices?—Yes.

7102. I understand you to say that, even if by legislation it were possible to re-create these small holdings, you are afraid the result would only be to bring about a repetition of the old process, namely, their gradual extinction?—That is my feeling, certainly.

7103. You spoke of your preference (if anything was done) for the Ashbourne Act; do I understand you rightly that that was because the new owners who would be created under it would prefer to have their transactions direct with the central authority instead of with the local authority?—No; I think it was rather more because of the feeling or sentiment that in the course of time they would become absolute owners, free from any authority.

7104. They would prefer, you think, to be absolute owners, and would dislike to have a local authority as landlord?—I do not think that anybody would like to have a local authority as a landlord very long.

7105. If they were to have a landlord at all, they would greatly prefer to retain the existing landlord than to have the local authority as a new landlord?—Undoubtedly.

7106. The local authority, you contend, would be compelled, as a matter of course, to let the land to the highest bidder?—I think they must, in justice to the ratepayers; that is their answer to the ratepayers.

7107. Do you go so far as to say this: that if such a system was to be adopted as has been contemplated, in order to make it effective, it would be necessary to have something in the nature of valued rents, such as they have in Ireland now?—Yes.

7108. Taking the case of bad times, assuming that there should be any further fall in the prices of produce, I understand you to say that in your opinion the local authorities could not be considerate towards the new occupiers consistently with their duty to the ratepayers in the matter of the reduction of rents, in the same way that many landlords are considerate at the present time?—I do not see how they could at all. Of course they might express a feeling of sympathy, and so on; but they could not put it into a practical form, I think.

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

7109. Then either the new owner must be compelled at all costs to pay the rent he had agreed to pay, however little he might be able to do so, or the ratepayers must undergo considerable loss;—Yes; or the owner will sell his interest for what he can get, which, at any rate, would be far less than he gave for the land, to be quit of it.

7110. He would have to sell out at a very considerable sacrifice?—Yes.

7111. You were asked as to an extension of the allotment system; and I understood you to say that that opened up another question at once, and that the value of the allotment system, in your opinion, depended upon the fact that it was an adjunct to the industry of a man who made his livelihood by his labour?—Yes.

7112. Would it not also open up the difficult question of buildings if the size of the allotments was to be increased from one acre, as has been sometimes proposed, to five acres; if the allotment was to be of the size of five acres it would necessitate buildings, would it not?—Certainly.

7113. Who would have to provide the buildings?—Either the local authority must lend the money, or else the small owner must provide the buildings.

7114. So far as you have had experience of small owners, would they be in a position to do that?—No, they are not, certainly. They are unwilling also to do it; they cannot afford to do it; that is the truth of it.

7115. Then if it was done at all it could only be done by the local authority?—Yes.

7116. That would entail upon them very great expense?—Yes; and on the other hand they would be unwilling to build, because they would get so small a return.

7117. Supposing they did build, from your practical experience, would you say that the return would recoup the outlay?—They would be in the position that many landowners are; they would get no return upon the outlay.

7118. You said, I think, that the landowners get 1 per cent. return upon their outlay?—One per cent. is the outside.

7119. You also said, as I understand, that these small owners in Westmorland, at the period of which you speak, as a rule, did not make their holdings pay more than 2½ per cent.?—I meant that they sold as soon as they could get 2½ per cent., or rather that when they sold their land only produced 2½ per cent.

7120. They sold because they probably got 4 per cent. upon the money elsewhere?—Yes.

7121. That would be their position precisely at the present time, you think?—That is my feeling.

7122. You have been speaking of your own experience, that experience being in Westmorland, you said, and also in the Eastern and Western Counties?—Yes; I was referring to the Midland Counties and also Essex.

7123. What you say to us to-day refers to the Midland Counties and to Essex, as well as to Westmorland?—Yes, the same principle applies to both.

7124. You

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Sir *Walter Foster.*

7124. You said in the course of your evidence that the small occupiers, in some instances, produced more than the larger farmers?—Yes, in a few individual cases.

7125. You said "under happy circumstances"?—Yes.

7126. What are the "happy circumstances" that you referred to?—I was referring perhaps more especially to butchers or hotel-keepers, because they have a larger supply of manure ready to hand, and are able to bring the manure on to the land at less cost than if they had to buy it.

7127. Have you formed that opinion from any instances that have come within your experience, in which the tillage and the attention to the general cultivation of the land was better in the hands of small owners than of large farmers?—In these particular cases of butchers and hotel-keepers the land is better farmed; but in the case of small cowkeepers and men of that class it is not any better farmed.

7128. So that, if you have a small owner under favourable conditions as regards capital, you think that he would probably produce more on a small farm than a large farmer would in proportion?—He might do so if he had facilities for doing so.

7129. You said that when these small holdings began to come into the market in Westmorland there were always plenty of people to offer a certain price for them?—Yes.

7130. That shows that the demand for small holdings had not ceased?—It had not.

7131. But you said that the small people were unable to compete in the market with the big landowner?—They could compete, but they could not compete so far. They did not care to give so much as the big owners did.

7132. Has that desire for small holdings ceased up to the present time, or is it going on still?—It is still going on up to a certain extent, but it does not go to the same point that the desire goes with the large landowner. The larger owner can still afford to give more than the small owner.

7133. Do not you think that the purchase of this land by large owners, and the present condition of the land laws tending to settle these estates and keep the land in large masses, has prevented a fair distribution of land among those people who desire to have it?—It is possible that it has.

7134. So that the existing state of legislation has had something to do with it?—If you refer to the law of settlement, possibly it is so.

7135. You say that the population in your district has decreased?—Yes, in the rural districts.

7136. How much has it decreased?—I am afraid I cannot form any idea; I know that it has gone back in the rural districts, but it has increased in the towns.

7137. It has considerably decreased in the rural districts, has it not?—Yes.

7138. Do you consider that a bad thing economically and socially?—I do not know that it is a bad thing. They have more conveniences living together in a town than they would have if scattered all over the country. I am speaking now as a resident in the country.

7139. If those people had small holdings and

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

were living in the country, it would be a better and healthier state of things socially, would it not?—But then those holdings must be sufficient for them to live upon.

7140. I am assuming that. I think you said just now that the sanitary Acts had something to do with the pulling down of the cottages?—What I said was, that it added to the outlay which the landlord had to make.

7141. If a cottage were reported as in an unsatisfactory sanitary condition, it was cheaper to pull it down than to put it into order?—Yes.

7142. And that, I presume, has had something to do with the depopulation of the rural districts? It has been an item in the whole thing.

7143. You went on further to say that as regards any scheme for re-creating small holdings, you would prefer some system like the Ashbourne Act; that is to say, where the man is to become the absolute owner in the course of time?—Yes; I mean that would be more popular with small purchasers.

7144. Would it not be open to this objection, that you would get the land aggregated again into the hands of large owners?—No doubt it would come to that.

7145. Could not that objection be met by a system under which these little farms could be acquired under a scheme something like the Ashbourne Act, but with a perpetual quit-rent of 5*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre remaining?—I do not think that would be an improvement upon the present position.

7146. It would give the local authorities (the owners of the land) the power of preventing the aggregation of these small farms into large ones, would it not?—It might; but I do not think it would, for this reason, that they would always sell or let the land to the highest bidder.

7147. That highest bidder being an occupying cultivator; I am assuming that it is restricted to occupying cultivators?—It would probably be difficult to define whom they are to sell to and whom they are not to sell to.

7148. Assuming that such a scheme could be drawn up, do not you think that that would work in the way of maintaining these small cultivating occupiers?—I do not think that it would help them very much.

7149. Do you see no means of putting these men on the soil and keeping them there?—If the State would advance the money to the present landowners at a low rate of interest on condition that they should subdivide the land, I believe that the landowners would be prepared to do so.

7150. You would propose to subsidise the landowners?—Encourage the landowners to subdivide, and they will do so.

7151. You mean encourage them by a grant of public money to subdivide their large farms into small ones; that would be your method of getting those people back upon the soil, would it?—You must show the landlord that he can borrow money and get a profit upon it, or else he would not burden his estate with it.

7152. If they could get a subsidy of public money, and a profit, of course, that would be a very good thing for the landowners?—Yes.

7153. What are the rents per acre of small

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

farms in your district?—The small farms will be from 30 *s.* to 40 *s.* an acre. The accommodation land close to the towns varies from 3 *l.* 10 *s.* up to 5 *l.* or 6 *l.*, according to position.

7154. What is the rent of the larger farms?—The rent would be about 30 *s.* to 35 *s.* an acre.

7155. Would there be about 5 *s.* an acre difference?—About that. The same land would probably be let in larger farms at 5 *s.* less than in smaller ones.

7156. Are the rents of the small farms paid as well as those of the large ones?—Yes.

7157. Then why is 5 *s.* more charged for the small farms?—Because there is more competition.

7158. That is to say, that there is a greater demand for small holdings than for large ones?—Yes; but, on the other hand, if the landowner takes into account his expenditure he gets a better return from the same land in one large farm than if it is in three small ones, because of the extra cost of the buildings.

Mr. *J. W. Lowther.*

7159. You gave us some instances in which an estate had been for a considerable number of years in the hands of the same small owners; would such estates be so kept in the same hands by the law of settlement?—No, I do not think it was the law of settlement at all that caused it; I think it was really pride; the estate had been in the family so long, and they held it as long as they possibly could.

7160. You do not think that the law of settlement had anything to do with the small men keeping their small estates?—No, but I rather think that the law of primogeniture had. The little men took a copy from the larger men, and went on leaving their land to the first son, subject to charges. I think it was quite as much that, and the sentiment that the land had been in the family so many years, that induced them to retain the land as long as they did.

7161. Do you think that if the custom of primogeniture had not been in existence these small estates would not have remained in the hands of one family from generation to generation, but would have been divided?—It would have been subdivided so much sooner, I think.

7162. What was the state of the buildings, generally speaking, and the condition of the land upon these small holdings, when they were bought by Lord Bective?—They were in a very bad condition. They had been held as long as they possibly could without any expenditure; and the result was that the moment we bought them we were compelled to put them in order, in some cases pulling them down and rebuilding them entirely, and in other cases renovating them.

7163. I suppose one of the reasons of the sale to you of these small estates was the fact that the small owner had to contemplate a very large outlay upon his buildings in order to keep them up?—Yes; we have several instances in which the owner, after selling it, has rented it from the purchaser, and has done better than before, because he has had more capital.

7164. Do you think that a large landowner like Lord Bective puts more into the land acre per acre than a smaller purchaser would have done,

Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

coming in to buy properties of this description?—I am quite sure he does. I have several instances that I could give showing how a small owner could not afford to have done what Lord Bective has done.

7165. I suppose his buildings are more substantial and more costly?—I do not think that individually they are more costly, but there are more of them. Of course the houses would be better; and the farm buildings are a little more commodious, and therefore cost more.

7166. Is it your experience that in the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland there is any strong desire amongst small men to invest capital in land?—I should say there is not now, because within the last fortnight I have been at a sale of two or three small farms of 15 to 30 acres; and, although the local men were bidders up to a certain point, they were all sold to the larger men; they sold at about 30 years' purchase. Fifteen years ago they would have sold at 35 or 36 years' purchase, but now they are 30 years; the small men would bid up to 25 years.

7167. You gave us an example of the way in which the local authority in your neighbourhood managed their property; what was the place that you referred to?—It was the town of Kendal that I referred to.

7168. That is the case of a big town?—Yes.

7169. Is there any complaint on the part of the working men of the way in which the local authority manage their estate?—Yes, there have been complaints made. Application has been made to me to sell land because they could not get any land from the local authority. The terms upon which the local authority sold were such that the small building societies and co-operative societies could not afford to buy it; and, therefore, they came to me, as representing a landowner outside, to sell them land for building.

7170. Do they let their land on lease?—They sell portions of land for building sites and let the remainder off on short leases.

7171. They let the land to the highest bidder?—Yes.

7172. I suppose one of the chief elements in the success of any scheme of small holdings would be the position in which they are placed?—Undoubtedly; the situation has everything to do with it.

7173. Proximity to a town, for instance, has an important bearing?—Yes, that is the most important item of all.

7174. And also the character of the soil?—Yes.

7175. Can you give us any evidence with regard to sewage farms?—Sewage farms, as everybody knows, produce double or treble what the land did before; but I think there is not a single instance in the country where sewage farms pay. I admit that they produce more, but the cost of producing that extra quantity is not repaid.

7176. I suppose that you really give that as an instance of a case in which manure becomes unremunerative beyond a certain point?—Yes, the land only returns a profit up to a certain point.

7177. Speaking generally, I suppose in the neighbourhood

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Mr. *J. W. Lowther*—continued.

neighbourhood of most towns land is let for small holdings?—Yes, you find it is so everywhere.

7178. Have you, on behalf of Lord Bective, ever made any proposal to let pasture in cow-gates?—Yes; Lord Bective asked me some years ago to try and arrange it; he said, "There is a certain field, and I should like to let it in cow-gates amongst my workmen; will you so arrange it?" I was anxious to carry that out as far as I could, but after due consideration we found we were obliged to give it up as there were certain difficulties in the way. One difficulty was as to whom we were to let it to. We could not let it to all the men, because if they all had a cow a-piece there would be no demand for the surplus milk and butter; but the greatest difficulty was with regard to the buildings. Each man wanted his own building and his own manure-stead to himself. Some of them said, "If all our hay is put together in one barn, and all our manure goes into one pit, I do not know whether I get my share or not, and I do not know whether my neighbour gets more than his share or not." That was the greatest difficulty. Another difficulty was that the men who could best afford to buy cows were the mechanics, masons, carpenters, and so on, men who were in receipt of the highest rate of wages, and who therefore could least afford to give up their time, and who were therefore unwilling to give up their time.

7179. Did the proposal fall through?—Yes. They said, "We would very much rather you would sell to us from the home farm the surplus milk at ordinary prices," and that has been done ever since.

7180. I suppose that the difficulty in the way of an extension of the allotment system really is that the crops require attention at the same time, whether they are grown on allotments or grown on large holdings?—Yes; it does not matter where they are grown.

7181. Therefore, just at the very time when a farmer is wanting his labourer to cut and get in the hay or corn, the labourer is also wanting to spend the same time upon his own hay or corn?—Exactly.

7182. With regard to a question which Sir Walter Foster asked you just now, I did not understand you to say that you thought the State ought to give a subsidy to landlords, as well as lending them money, on easy terms, for the purpose of putting up buildings?—No; I meant that if the State would encourage the landowner by lending him money for the purpose of subdivision the landowner would be prepared to do it, if he could see a profit in it.

7183. Do you think, speaking generally, that tenants would prefer to have the present landowner as their landlord to having a local authority as landlord?—Yes, there is no doubt about that. They do not care about the local authority as a landlord at all.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7184. What is the smallest farm on which you think a man can live in your part of the country?—I should say a rental of 50 *l.* a year.

7185. Are the small farms of from 50 *l.* a year rental to 100 *l.* a year, or somewhat over 100 *l.*

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

a year, diminishing or not diminishing in your district?—They are not diminishing. The farms which have diminished are those under 50 acres; farms between 15 and 50 acres.

7186. What I may call small farms proper are not diminishing?—No.

7187. Were they diminishing until a few years ago?—No; the farms which did diminish were, as I said, those between 15 and 50 acres; those upon which a man could not find sufficient employment for the whole of his time.

7188. In this dairy country in Cumberland has the agricultural depression been felt?—Yes, to a certain extent, but not to the extent that it has been felt elsewhere, I think.

7189. Have the small farms proper, that is, farms from 50 *l.* to 150 *l.*, weathered the agricultural depression better than the larger ones?—I do not think they have weathered it better than the larger ones; it has been a question of having surplus capital. The man who has had the capital to spare has weathered it much better than the man who has only just sufficient capital to stock his land with; for this reason, that when it came to a question of selling stock the man who had only a small capital was obliged to sell his stock just when everybody else was wanting to sell, whereas the man who had a large capital could hold his hand and wait till people were wanting to buy again.

7190. Is the dairy system in Cumberland a favourable one for the small farms?—No, it is rather in favour of the larger ones; I mean farms from 50 to 100 acres.

7191. Perhaps you may be aware that the large farmers in Wigtownshire send their milk for sale as far as Dundee; do you send your milk to such places as Newcastle?—Some goes to towns in their neighbourhood, some goes to Manchester, and some to Liverpool; but the bulk of the milk is consumed at home; it is the butter that goes away.

7192. Have you any large butter or cheese factories in the neighbourhood?—There are two or three butter factories in the county, but they are not supported very much.

7193. Is that a system which is favourable to small farms?—No, I should say that it is rather in favour of the larger ones than the smaller ones; but we do not care much about the factories, for this reason, it takes away the surplus milk.

7194. In speaking of a butter factory, I meant a large concern which buys up the milk from the smaller farms?—Quite so.

7195. You are not, as I understand, much in favour of that system?—No, because it takes away the surplus milk, and that robs the young stock, and therefore it is against farmers rearing stock.

7196. You said, I think, that a large landowner would be able to put a great deal more money into the land than a small owner could; but is it not your experience in these days that the large landowners also are very short of cash, very often?—Yes, but they have spent their capital upon their land and their capital is still in the land.

7197. Your proposal, as I understand it, was to encourage landlords to create small farms by lending

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

lending them money; do you think that if the money was lent on favourable terms the landlords would be willing to create small farms and put up the necessary buildings?—If they could see a profit to be got out of it.

7198. But I am asking you do you think that at the present time they would see a profit?—If they could let their land upon better term than at present they would.

7199. Do you think that under the present circumstances they would see a profit?—They would have to be satisfied upon that score first, and that is a question which is not very fully settled at present; whether, supposing a farm is divided into four little farms, it would be any more profitable to the landowner than it is in its present condition.

7200. You are not prepared, as I understand, to express an opinion upon that point?—No, I am rather in favour of keeping the farms as they are.

7201. Is there any system in your part of the country under which the tenant does anything towards the buildings?—I have always put my foot upon that, and as a rule they do not do it, because they have not the capital, for one thing.

7202. You say you have always put your foot upon it, so that I suppose it has been sometimes tried?—No, what I meant was this; a tenant comes to me sometimes and says, "Will you find the materials if I will put up the building," and as a rule in such cases I have said, "No, your capital is very much better employed upon the land, and I will put up the building, and you may pay me so much interest upon it."

7203. Do you think that that is a better arrangement for all parties?—Certainly it is.

7204. When you have put up the buildings, do you not find sometimes that you have done it at a great expense, and that the tenant is discontented, and says the buildings do not suit him, and that they ought not to have cost so much?—No; I find that after you have charged the man interest for a year or two he will tell you that the buildings are not worth the interest, and you can see it plain enough.

7205. You spoke of cowgates; what do you call a cowgate in your part of the country; is it a common field where cows are turned out?—Yes.

7206. How can the question of separate manure heaps, and so on, arise in such a case?—It arises in regard to the maintenance of the cows during the winter. During the summer time the men can turn the cows on to the pasture, but during the winter the cows have to be kept in buildings, and that is where the question of buildings and manure comes in.

7207. Does not the man take the cow to his own cottage, and put up a shed there?—That was the difficulty; each man wanted a shed at home to put his cow in, and I saw that that was going to cost more than the thing was worth. I said, "Are you prepared to pay interest upon the expenditure? We will let you have a pasture at the present agricultural value; if we put you up a small building at your own cottages you will have to pay interest upon that expenditure.' They could not afford to do that.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

7208. Could they not put up a small shanty or lean-to, by their cottage, for their cow?—I do not think they would be allowed to do that; there would be the sanitary authority to object, for one thing.

7209. I heard yesterday of a case where a number of cows are kept under the system that each man pays 3 *l.* for a cow, and 2 *l.* for an acre of land, paying 5 *l.* altogether; do you think that that would be a kind of system that would succeed?—We tried to introduce the system I have described, but we found these difficulties in the way with regard to the buildings for the cows in winter.

7210. I do not know whether you have been over the border into Dumfries-shire and Kirkcudbrightshire, and can say whether there is any considerable difference in the state of agriculture as compared with what it it is on the Cumberland side?—I think they have felt the depression more there than we have on the large farms.

7211. Is there any difference as to the tenure of land?—The farms are held on longer leases there; 21 years' leases.

7212. Do you know anything of the large Wigtownshire farmers who send their milk all the way to Dundee?—Yes.

7213. Are they prosperous as a rule?—No; I do not think they have weathered the storm better than Englishmen have. The men who have suffered most are the men dependent entirely upon corn; that is arable farmers. The men who have suffered least are the grass farmers, who produce beef, mutton, and butter.

7214. Have you heard of the Caledonian Railway Company, and, I believe, other railway companies, charging a fixed charge per gallon for milk, without any reference at all to the distance for which it is sent, so that, for instance, a large farmer is able to send milk for a penny a gallon for a long distance, while a small man sending it only for a short distance has to pay just the same?—Yes; we have instances of that. It depends upon what the competition is between the railway companies. If there are two companies running from the same point at one end to the same point at the other, these two companies will compete with each other, and will deliver the milk at that terminal point at a very much lower rate than at any intermediate place; it is the competition between the railway companies that brings down the rate.

7215. If there is no competition the small man suffers from the want of competition in sending his milk for a short distance, does he not?—And the large one does too; they all suffer.

7216. At present is not the system in vogue that an equal charge is made for a long distance as for a short distance?—Yes.

7217. Is not that rather unfair?—I think you cannot control it, because the railway companies will desire to make the best terms they can. It is competition between the different companies that does it all.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

7218. You have given us a list as to the various sizes of the holdings on the Underley Estate; I forget

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

forget whether you were asked if there is still much demand for small holdings round about the towns and villages of that district?—There is nothing beyond the present supply. I should be prepared to let out some more land as accommodation land in the neighbourhood of a town if there was a demand for it, but within the last five years I have been obliged to put back some of the fields which had been let as accommodation land to the farms which they had been taken away from.

7219. You have been able to meet such demands as have been made, and you consider you could meet further demands if they were made?—Yes, I should be willing to do so.

7220. Then it could not be said that in that part of the country there is any want of land for the purpose mentioned?—No, I do not think there is at all.

7221. You yourself, I gather, are decidedly favourable to the system of small holdings?—Yes, I always have been favourable to the small farming system where it could be carried out, but I find great difficulties with regard to the outlay on the part of the landlord. I should perhaps mention that during the 24 years we have done away with 77 small farms, but those were farms between 15 and 50 acres, which did not require the whole of the man's time, and which he found therefore he was unable to work to advantage.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*.

7222. Are you acquainted with the evidence which was given before the Royal Commissions of 1867 and 1882, especially with regard to the district you are speaking of?—Yes, I have read it all.

7223. You are aware that a very important part of the evidence given seemed to be rather contrary to the views you have given to the Committee to-day?—Yes.

7224. Do you remember one of the Sub-Commissioners stating that he was "informed by a land agent of great experience that a third of the existing tenants were once farm servants"?—Yes; I believe I was the agent that he refers to, because I recollect his asking me the question.

7225. Do you know Mr. C. Webster, of Kendal?—Yes, I know him very well.

7226. He said before that Commission "I am of opinion that to absorb small holdings in large farms will ultimately be found unwise and impolitic. I look upon this class as one of the ground works of our national stability. More attention is given by small holders to the production of butter, poultry, eggs, &c., and often beneath the notice of large farmers"; do you agree with that?—I quite agree with that, but I say that, practically, you cannot carry it out.

7227. But you agree with such a statement that this class is one of the groundworks of our national stability, and also with what Mr. Webster says as to giving more attention to the production of smaller articles of food?—Yes, it is desirable to do so, but my difficulty is that it cannot all be done at a profit.

7228. Then there was another witness, Mr. Pearson, whom, perhaps, you know?—Yes.

7229. He says, "This tendency to form large farms is economically a mistake;" do you agree

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

with that?—It depends upon which point of view he is speaking of, and whether he is speaking from the owner's side or the occupier's side. From the owner's side, it is undoubtedly the case that the amalgamation of three or four farms into one is economical.

7230. What other side is there; the public side or the people's side?—I should say the people's side, rather.

7231. You would hold that it is a good thing economically for the landowner but not for the people?—Yes.

7232. Then one of the Sub-Commissioners, Mr. Culley, states, in 1867, that it is often strongly represented to him that "the great increase in the size of farms is to be regretted, as it deprives the provident and industrious labourer of the old inducements to save money and become a a farmer, large farms being out of his reach;" do you agree with that?—Yes; in practice, I have tried to carry that out. We have maintained small farms as far as we possibly could, but force of circumstances has compelled us to do away with the 77 farms I referred to.

7233. Then the Rev. Mr. Hodgson states that, "Where farms are small it is a constant ambition with farm servants to become farmers. They save as much us they can, and when that object is obtained, live poorly and work hard;" do you agree with that?—Yes.

7234. With regard to what you said about the applications for the small farms, may I refer you to what was said by Mr. F. Pearson, who, I think, is a land agent, is he not?—And a solicitor.

7235. He states that there are 10 applications for farms of moderate size for four of larger ones; was that according to your experience?—That was the case at the time that he referred to, but there has been rather a change in that respect.

7236. The Rev. James Stephens states that labourers who are honest and frugal save money, as the deposits in the savings banks show, and that many of them save enough to rent and stock a small farm of their own; do you agree with that?—Yes; but I think that the term "labourer" there is differently applied to what we generally understand by the term. The labourers to whom all these people are referring are the farmers' sons, who go out as labourers first of all on the larger farms, and then, as soon as they are able to scrape the capital together, they take a small farm.

7237. When you say the farmers' sons, do yon mean the sons of small holders?—No, the son of the larger farmer. With us, in the case of a man who occupies, say, 150 or 200 acres, his sons will go out as farm servants upon other farms, and, as soon as they can scrape the capital together, they will take a little farm of 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* a year.

7238. Is there any evidence at all given before the Royal Commission that shows the distinction which you have just drawn?—I do not recollect whether there is or is not.

7239. Mr. Norman, who is also a land agent, said, "I am opposed to the system of small farms, and to encouraging farm servants to look to becoming tenant farmers;" do you agree with that opinion?—No; during the last 20 years I have tried to encourage the small men as far as possi-

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

ble, but the difficulty I have always had is doing it at a profit.

7240. Your proposal is to subsidise the landlords in order that they might divide the land into small holdings, and put buildings upon it?—It is to enable them to do that.

7241. Where would the money come from; would it be out of the rates, through the local authority?—I am supposing that the State would lend the money. It is proposed to lend the money to the local authorities, and I suggest that they would lend it to the landlords instead.

7242. Do you mean that the local authority would pass it on to the landlords?—I should say let the State advance direct to the landowners.

7243. You couple with that the condition that the landowners should see a profit?—Yes; you must do that before the landowners will take it up.

7244. In your opinion do you consider such a suggestion practicable; do you think that if such a law were passed it would be operative in any way for securing small holdings?—I confess I do not think it is myself.

7245. Then we might dismiss your suggestion, might we not, as holding out no great hopes to the rural classes that are likely to be fulfilled?—It would be a cheaper way of doing what you want to do.

7246. But not a practicable one?—No.

7247. You said that if the plan of purchase through the Ashbourne Act were established you thought that ultimately matters would revert back to the position in which they are now?—Yes.

7248. But supposing that on the sale of the land by the local authority the condition of cultivation was attached to the sale, and that no one was to be helped into a farm by public money unless he was ready to cultivate it, would that get over the difficulty you refer to?—I do not think so, because how are you to ascertain whether the purchaser is going to cultivate or not.

7249. Supposing that means for ascertaining that could be devised, if the condition of cultivation was attached to the sale, would not that be a preventitive of this competition of the large capitalist to which you have referred?—I fancy such a condition would prevent a small man buying, because he might say, "I may want to sell, and the competition for my interest would be reduced if I am to sell only to those who cultivate."

7250. Supposing that that condition of cultivation were attached to the sale, it would prevent the competition of large capitalists who wanted land for luxuries or for other purposes, would it not?—It might do that, but I am afraid that it would prevent competition on the part of the small man too, because it restricts his interest.

7251. It would get over the difficulty of competition of the large capitalists, would it not?—It might get over that difficulty.

7252. Do you think that the local authority (that is the ratepayers) have any right to help a man into the enjoyment of land except for cultivation?—No.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

7253. For the purpose we will say of sub-letting, and becoming a landowner, and cutting it up into building sites, or for any purpose except that of cultivation; do you think that the community have the right to risk the ratepayers' money?—I think you would have to allow the local authority to sell for building sites for instance.

7254. I am not speaking of the local authority, but of the man who has been helped into a small holding by the aid of the ratepayers, represented by the local authority; is it right that a man should be so helped for any other purpose besides that of cultivation?—It may not be right, but I afraid if you restrict him from selling any of his land for building sites, you keep him out of the market; you are restricting his interest in the land.

7255. Your view, as I understand it, is that they would not take advantage of the facilities for cultivation unless they had the right to do as they liked with the land?—Yes.

7256. You stated that in your opinion the small holders, under the Small Holdings Bill, which you have been referring to, would not like the local authority for a landlord; but under Lord Ashbourne's Act, would not the local authority be the landlord for 50 years, or whatever the term might be?—Yes, but it is only for that period; the local authority will never be a popular landlord under any circumstances.

Chairman.

7257. The local authority under the Ashbourne Act would have none of the rights of a landlord, would it, except the right to receive the annual instalments?—I gather that that is all.

7258. It would have no right to interfere with the cultivation or to restrict the sale of the property, subject to an annual payment, or in any other way to interfere with the absolute rights of the owner?—No.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

7259. Wherein would their power as landlord differ from the power in the local authority under the Small Holdings Bill, except in the power to prevent sub-division and sub-letting?—I do not think that it would differ in any other respect except those to which you refer.

7260. Do not you think that such powers should exist?—They may exist, but they will not be popular powers.

7261. Do you agree that, under such restrictions, if they were adopted (that is, the acceptance of the condition of cultivation), things could not revert to their present condition?—No doubt that would be against things reverting to their present condition; but I think that it would be too great a restriction to place upon the ownership or occupation of land. You must let a man do as he likes with his own, I think.

7262. Do you think, in the case of local authorities being empowered to put Lord Ashbourne's Act into force, they would be likely to undertake that duty?—I do not think that the small local authorities would; the larger ones might.

7263. And with regard to letting the land in the same manner as provided by the Allotment Act,

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

Act, do you see any difference between the local authority taking any risk under the Allotments Act (which involves a very small amount of land) and their taking the risk upon the larger areas which would be necessary for small holdings?—No; I should not see any objection to the local authority doing it, but I do not think that the local authority would be any more inclined to do it on a large scale than they have been on a small scale.

7264. But there would be more risk in doing it on a large scale, would there not?—Yes.

7265. May I not take it that it would be no us to advocate any legislative provision that would not be likely to be put in force by the local authorities?—You may advocate anything, but my impression is that this would not be put into force.

7266. In other words, it would be useless to tantalise the labouring classes by a suggestion which we know economic causes would prevent from being put in force by the local authorities?—Quite so; it would be idle to raise their hopes.

7267. Quite so; it would be idle to raise their hopes?—You said that, in your opinion, the Small Holdings Bill would burden the rates; in what way would it burden the rates more than Lord Ashbourne's Act would?—It might burden them because the local authority would have to buy the whole of a farm; they could not buy part, and supposing they bought a farm of 250 acres, and then divided it into 10 or a dozen lots, although they might be able to sell the first five or six lots at a fair price, they would be left with the outside land producing, perhaps, a very small income. By the time they have calculated the income on the one hand, and the interest they have to pay on the other, I think that the local authority would be out of pocket.

7268. But seeing that we are speaking of the creation of small holdings, and not of enabling the sitting tenant to become an owner, would not the same objection, or the same risk, precisely attach to operations under Lord Ashbourne's Act?—There would be quite the same risk as regards making a profit upon the purchase.

7269. Wherein is there any burden upon the ratepayers under the Small Holdings Bill any more than there is under Lord Ashbourne's Act?—I do not know that there would be any. The risk which I was referring to was that the

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

local authority might not be able to sell the land for the same price that they gave.

7270. I gather that you were not aware in considering the proposal that one per cent. extra was to be charged, which would immediately be invested by the local authority as a sinking fund?—Yes, I understand that; but then that has nothing to do with the rate at which the land sells. Taking the land in our neighbourhood, it sells at 30 years' purchase; that is about 3⅓ per cent. The local authority would not be able to borrow the money, I take it, from the State, and charge the one per cent., and still be able to lend the money at less 3⅓ per cent.; and the land, as I say, is only returning 3⅓.

7271. You spoke of the increased production of the farms under large tenancies or holdings; does that apply to other articles besides corn; does it apply to the smaller articles of food?—I was referring to produce generally. Our farms are not corn-producing farms; they are dairy farms and stock-producing farms.

7272. You spoke of the people doing better when they migrated to large towns; are you intimately acquainted with the condition of the people in large towns?—I cannot say that I am very well acquainted with it.

7273. In expressing that opinion you did not speak from experience?—No. They never come back again, and I judge from that fact very much.

7274. I think you said that the rent of small farms was about 2 per cent. upon the capital value?—Two to 2½ per cent.

7275. How do you arrive at the capital value?—I was talking of the prices we gave, and the prices at which land in the neighbourhood has been selling, and I say that the present rent will not produce more than 2 per cent. upon the capital value.

7276. I think I understood you to say further that the rent of small farms was 2*l.* per acre?—Thirty-five shillings to 2*l.*

7277. Are we to understand from you that the land in your neighbourhood is worth 100*l.* per acre in the open market?—Yes, a good deal of it.

7278. How does that compare with the statement that the land has gone down in value so much?—The rental value has gone down 10 or 15 per cent., and of course the purchase value has gone down with it.

Mr. THOMAS RIGBY, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

7279. YOU are a farmer, I think?—Yes.

7280. At Sutton Weaver, in Cheshire.

7281. Are there many small holders in your district?—Yes, there are.

7282. Are they owners or only tenants?—Chiefly tenants.

7283. But there are some who are owners, are there not?—Yes, there some who are owners.

7284. How do they get on in comparison with other farmers?—They get on very well generally when they have holdings that they can make profitable by cultivation. I mean that they get on

Chairman—continued.

pretty much as they apply themselves to their business in cultivating the land, and as they are successful in selling their produce; so far as they are good business people, they get on pretty well.

7285. If they are capable people they get on?—Quite so.

7286. On the average, do they do better or worse than the larger farmers?—I do not think they do better than the larger farmers; they do as well, I daresay, when they have capital, and have the ability to manage their places well.

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Mr. *Chaplin.*

7287. Does that apply both to small owners and small occupiers?—Yes.

Chairman.

7288. Have they increased or diminished in numbers in recent years?—They are much about the same, I think, in my neighbourhood.

7289. Are the rents of small farms higher or less than those of ordinary sized farms?—The rents of small farms are rather higher than those of the larger farms.

7290. Are you in favour of small holdings?—Yes.

7291. You think that their numbers should be increased?—I think they should, if that can be done under circumstances in which they are reasonably likely to be profitable.

7292. In your neighbourhood is there a demand for such holdings?—Yes.

7293. Is the demand greater than the supply?—I do not thing so. The supply is about equal to the demand at present. I do not think that there is an extra demand, but that arises, perhaps, from the fact that the supply is not there. If there was a chance of getting hold of a small holding at a reasonable rental, and in a reasonable way, I believe that the demand would increase.

7294. What size of small holdings are most in demand?—From 50 to 100 acres; I mean in small farms.

7295. You are speaking now of cases where the people would get their whole subsistence from the farm?—Yes.

7296. Do you think that if facilities were given for the establishment of small farms of this kind they would be taken advantage of?—Yes, I believe they would.

7297. Are you in favour of the interference of the Legislature in order to secure this result?—Yes, I think so, if it could be done in a way so that it could be got at reasonably.

7298. Would you prefer that these holdings should be ownerships or tenancies?—I think that tenancies would suit the majority of people better than ownerships.

7299. Why would they prefer tenancies to ownerships?—They would not require so much capital; and, as a rule, the men who are wanting and would take small holdings, and small farms, are men of industrious habits, and men who are trying to get on; and I take it that they could get on with small tenancies with less capital than they would require to purchase the land and work it afterwards.

7300. If a large portion of the capital-money were lent to them, and they were only required to find one-fourth of the money do you think that that difficulty would exist?—I am afraid that it would. If they had to find one-fourth of the money I am afraid that that would be a serious hindrance at the commencement.

7301. Do you think that there are many persons who desire to become small owners who have saved money, or would save money, and be able to employ it in that way?—I think that there would be a disposition on the part of such people to do so.

7302. They would be the most thrifty and industrious members of that class, would they not?—Yes, that is very likely.

Chairman—continued.

7303. And probably the people whom it would be safest to assist?—Yes.

7304. I suppose you would not be in favour of allowing the local authority to lend the whole of the purchase-money?—I think not.

7305. You would think they ought to have some security in the shape of a payment down?—Yes.

7306. And if they required a payment down of a small proportion that would sift out the applicants, and only the better class of applicants would be likely to be able to comply with that condition?—Yes; that is very likely.

7307. But in addition to that you think that the largest demand would be for tenancies?—Yes; I think so.

7308. In your neighbourhood do you think if the local authority were authorised to facilitate the creation of small farms that they would do so?—Yes; I think they would be disposed to do so.

7309. Would they buy land and let it out?—I cannot quite say that. As the local authority is constituted at present half the number are merchants and manufacturers in my county.

7310. I ought to have put my question in this way; do you think that a local authority, elected in the same way as the County Council is, that is to say, a local authority elected by all the ratepayers, would be likely to undertake a speculation of the kind suggested?—I think so in agricultural counties.

7311. But if they were to do so, they would have to face a certain amount of risk, would they not, and they might lose money by it?—Yes.

7312. You think, however, that the ratepayers would not object to run that risk?—I think not if it was fenced round with such reasonable precautions as would be prudent; I mean in the way of getting the right tenants.

7313. How would they select the tenants?—By judging of their character and ability, and the amount of capital they had, I suppose.

7314. You think that must be left to the discretion of the local authority?—I think so.

7315. Do you think that there would be jealousy or difficulties of that kind among the members of the local authority in selecting the tenants?—I do not think so, but, perhaps, if they had only a limited quantity of land it would lead somewhat in that direction.

7316. If they were to choose only men of capacity, who they thought were certain to succeed, do not you think that everybody who was refused would be very angry?—That is very likely.

7317. Would they be able to get up an agitation on the ground that injustice had been done them?—They might, perhaps, but it could not live long, I think.

7318. It would be rather difficult, for instance, supposing two men applied who were both respectable men, to prove that the one man was likely to succeed, and that the other was a person who could not be trusted with the ratepayers' money?—Yes, it would be difficult.

7319. Especially as the man who was refused would have to pay his rates towards assisting the man who was accepted?—Yes; but that would be decided, I take it, by the votes of the members of the County Council; and it would depend upon

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Chairman—continued.

upon how the majority thought and felt as to who was elected.

7320. You think that the local authorities would be inclined to try the experiment?—I think in my county they would. I am a member of the county council, and I know them pretty well, and I fancy that they would be inclined to try the experiment.

7321. What sized farm is yours?—I only farm a small farm now, as compared with what I have done; I have some other occupations now. The farm I have now is 109 acres.

7322. Do you think that the large farmers would object to such a proposal as has been suggested?—I do not think they would, because it is generally allowed in Cheshire that a moderate-sized farm is the best to get. There are not many large farms in Cheshire.

7323. Would the farmers object to anything which made the labourers independent?—No, not generally; there is a good disposition generally, I think, to help the labourers.

7324. Is there a disposition to encourage the best of them to get on and to take land?—Yes, I think so.

7325. Do you think that these holdings would be occupied by people who have other occupations?—The small holdings would. The making of small holdings of 10 to 15 and 20 acres would be taken advantage of mostly by successful tradesmen, I think, who could go outside the town and live; and it would rather tend to help people of that character than people of purely agricultural pursuits.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7326. You referred just now to small farms of 50 to 100 acres as being most in demand; what is the usual size of small holdings in Cheshire?—Fifty to 100 or 150 acres. The largest number of farms, I think, would be about 100 acres. I once took the average size of the farms from the agricultural returns, and I found that it was 33 acres.

7327. Then you would hardly call 100 acres a small holding; what would you call a small holding?—Fifty acres, say.

7328. Fifty acres and under, I presume?—Yes.

7329. What is the usual rent of agricultural land in Cheshire?—Of course that depends upon circumstances.

7330. What is the usual rent of arable land?—Arable land would let at 30 *s.* to 40 *s.*

7331. And what is the rent of permanent pasturage?—Good pasture land is worth the same per acre, namely, 30 *s.* to 40 *s.*, and upwards.

7332. Is it not worth more than the agricultural land?—The pasture land is worth as much as any.

7333. But you say that it is the same as the arable; I should have thought that it was worth more?—We have not much arable land. There is not a large proportion of arable land in Cheshire, and what there is is fairly good land.

7334. Do you really maintain that in Cheshire the permanent pasture land is not worth more than arable land?—No; it is about the same throughout.

Mr. JOSEPH ALFRED SMITH, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

7335. WHERE do you live?—At Akenham, Ipswich.

7336. I believe you are Honorary Secretary of the East Suffolk Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

7337. And you are Managing Director of the Eastern Counties Dairy Institute?—Yes.

7338. Are you acquainted with the district of East Suffolk?—Yes.

7339. Are there many small holdings there?—Not a large number.

7340. In the first place, speaking of small owners, are there many of them?—No; very few, comparatively.

7341. Are there many small tenancies?—There are rather more small tenancies lately; the tendency has been to increase them somewhat.

7342. Did the tendency, of which we have heard elsewhere, to throw the farms together exist in Suffolk?—Yes; it prevailed to a very large extent about 20 years ago.

7343. Has that practice now ceased?—It has been very much checked, owing to the inability to let large farms.

7344. Is there a tendency now to revert to smaller farms?—Yes.

7345. Do these small farms pay a higher rent than the larger ones?—Yes.

7346. What is the difficulty in reversing the

Chairman—continued.

situation, and increasing the number of smaller farms?—There are many obstacles. In the first place, the question of another homestead has to be considered, that is one expense.

7347. You mean the difficulty of finding capital to erect buildings?—Yes; and then as regards the subdivision of land there are legal difficulties sometimes in the way of that.

7348. But the legal difficulties would only occur in the case of small ownerships, I presume?—Yes.

7349. In the case of small tenancies there would be no legal difficulties, would there?—Not in that case.

7350. In that case there would only be the difficulty of finding money for the necessary buildings?—Yes.

7351. What cultivation, in your opinion, is suitable for small holdings?—I do not think that small holdings would be successful to grow corn; I think that corn can be more successfully grown on large holdings. But for small holdings, I think, there is a decided opening to produce those luxuries which we now import from abroad, such as poultry, fruit, and vegetables.

7352. I will only ask you generally, are you in favour of small holdings?—Yes, I am in favour of them.

7353. You believe that it would be an advantage to extend them?—Yes, I do.

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Chairman—continued.

7354. Have you considered by what means the State could facilitate the creation of small holdings?—I have seen the Small Holdings Bill of last year, and in the main I agree with it; I think that it is a very good proposal. As an alternative proposal, perhaps the best I have heard of is that the State should purchase the land, and issue paper money, and charge a perpetual quit-rent. But of the two proposals I prefer the proposal of the Small Holdings Bill that was introduced last Session.

7355. Then I think I will confine myself to the proposal which is before the House of Commons, which I understand you prefer?—Yes.

7356. You say that in the main you agree with the proposal?—Yes.

7357. What objections do you take to it?—I do not think that the compulsory part of it would meet with general approval. The compulsory power to acquire land for the purpose proposed would raise a very general opposition.

7358. Do you think that it would be sufficient to give authority to purchase the land, and that the land could then be obtained by voluntary negotiations?—Yes. I think that the position of holdings of 50 acres is rather different from the position of allotments. In the case of allotments that compulsory provision is very valuable, and many allotments have been acquired under it; but in the case of small holdings I do not think that there is the same justification for it.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

7359. Have the allotments you speak of been acquired under the compulsory powers?—Yes; under the Allotments Act some large quantities of land in Suffolk were taken for allotments very successfully; but I do not think that the same reasons would apply to small holdings.

7360. Was it actually acquired by compulsion?—In the case of poor's land that I refer to it had to be let under the Act as allotments. The trustees or churchwardens were compelled under the Act to let it.

7361. Did they object to let, and were they forced to do so, or did they let voluntarily?—Their attention was called to the Act of Parliament, and they were obliged to do it. I am alluding to the case of land where the proceeds were devoted to the poor.

Chairman.

7362. Coming back to the Small Holdings Bill, is what you have suggested the only amendment that you wish to make in it?—There may be matters of detail that may be improved, but in the main I approve of it, and at present there is nothing further that suggests itself to me.

7363. I understand you would prefer a proposal which would make the purchaser an owner or *quasi*-owner, to one which would make him merely a tenant as under the Allotments Act?—Yes; that would give the man a more permanent interest in the holding.

7364. Do you think that there would be many applicants who would object to the conditions of the Small Holdings Bill against subletting or subdividing?—There might be objections to that, but still I do not think that they would be insuperable. I believe there would be very many applications, especially in the neighbourhood of towns or large villages.

Chairman—continued.

7365. Do you think that the requirement that one-fourth of the purchase-money should be paid down would be objected to?—Not by a thrifty man.

7366. You think that there would be thrifty men found who would take advantage of those facilities?—Yes; it would be no use for a man without capital to take up the land.

7367. Do you think there would be any objection to the payment of a perpetual quit-rent upon three-fourths of the purchase-money?—I think not.

7368. You do not think that in the course of time that rent would appear to be a tax, and would be resented as a tax upon a special industry?—I think not, considering that land has gone down one-half in value in the last 15 years, so that land now can be purchased at a comparatively low rate. There are quantities of land in my county selling at from 10 *l.* to 15 *l.* an acre.

7369. If land were to go down again after the purchase had been made, what should you say then?—It is not so likely to go down at the present price as it was when it was 25 *l.* or 30 *l.*, or even 35 *l.* an acre; prices are not so inflated now as they were then, and the probability of such a fall is not so great.

7370. Do you think that local authorities popularly constituted would lend a friendly assistance to any legislation of this kind?—Yes; I think that possibly, in the case of a local authority constituted as the present county council is, or as the proposed district council will be, it would; but I do not think that the present rural sanitary authorities would be troubled about it, or be trusted.

7371. Are the farmers favourable to small holdings?—I do not think that they care about it much on the whole: I do not think that the present race of farmers are anxious for it.

7372. Do they approve of labourers getting land to work on in addition to their ordinary work?—There are many objections to that, because just at the season when the farmer most requires a man he would probably wish to be on his own holding, and that would probably cause some irritation and difficulty.

7373. What sized holding do you contemplate as a holding upon which a small family can live?—It depends upon the quality of the soil, the industry of the man, and the size of the family; but I should say, perhaps, from 20 to 40 acres.

7374. In such a case, would you assume that the tenant would keep dairy stock?—If the holding was pasture, or partly pasture, he might do so; but, on the other hand, if it was all arable and subject to drought, as it is in some parts of the eastern district, it might not be possible.

7375. Have you any experience of small dairy farms?—I know several that have been conducted very successfully. Of course, much depends upon the energy and ability of the man himself.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7376. At the present price of land, is there any difficulty in obtaining small holdings in your neighbourhood?

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

neighbourhood?—In some places there is. They have increased to some extent during the last few years; but there are difficulties in the way, such as finding the whole of the purchase-money, for instance.

7377. But supposing that a man is able to arrange for the money, either by borrowing a portion or having sufficient himself, are there small holdings in your neighbourhood which he could get?—Yes, there are some, but I think not to the extent that they would like to acquire them under the provisions of a Bill like the Small Holdings Bill.

7378. Is there a necessity in your district for such a system as is proposed in the Bill?—I should say it would be a great advantage; it would tend to prevent the drifting of thrifty men into the towns, which I think is a great social evil.

7379. Do you consider that it would reduce pauperism and the poor rates, if small holdings were provided?—After a time it might, though its effects may not be seen at present.

7380. You have no statistics upon that point?—No, it must be a matter of speculation. I may mention, as regards statistics, that according to the last return the occupiers who rent land in Suffolk are 7,828, as against the occupiers who own land, 1,760; so that, practically, tenant farming is prevalent.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

7381. You were speaking just now about the difficulties as regards the farmer and a labourer who wanted to hire himself for part of his time and cultivate his own holding for the rest of his time; do you think that that would be a serious difficult ultimately?—Under present conditions, where we pay a certain wage all the year round, it evidently would be a serious difficulty with the farmer; but of course wages might be otherwise adjusted; they might be higher in summer than in winter, for instance, or there might be some adjustment so as to make it more fair, because the farmer and his labourer would be almost sure to differ as to the days on which the labourer would like to be away; they would both be wanting work done at the same time.

7382. Do you think that that difficulty, after a little experience, and as good feeling arose between the labourer and the farmer, would adjust itself by each trying to oblige the other as to the times and seasons when the work should be carried on?—It might be so, but at present, and for some long time till the custom has altered, it might be a difficulty.

7383. Would it not be an advantage to the farmers, generally speaking, to have a number of these small holders whose services they could occasionally have when wanted?—Yes; if they could have them in harvest time, for instance, it might be of service to them.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

7384. I think you stated that in your opinion these small holdings that we are speaking of would be no good for growing corn, but that you think they should be devoted chiefly to the production of such articles as we now import a good deal from abroad?—Yes; I think in the main corn can be grown cheaper and more economically on large farms, in consequence of the subdivivision by fences, and so on.

7385. When you speak of small holdings producing fruit and vegetables, for instance, I suppose that that would depend a good deal upon the locality, and the facilities for reaching a market?—Yes, to some extent it would.

7386. You would not, I presume, advocate the extension of small holdings for these purposes, unless, for instance, they were very near to a railroad or station?—At a considerable distance from a railway, I should think that small holdings would be of more assistance in the way of cowkeeping; a man might keep two or three cows.

7387. Provided, I suppose, that the nature of the land was suited for it?—Yes.

7388. But there is a great part of the land in your county which, I understand you to say, would not be suitable for cows?—Some of the arid parts are only suitable for sheep-walks; those I would not subdivide under any circumstances.

7389. Is poultry rearing adopted to any considerable extent in your county?—No; wherever it has been tried by large companies it has failed. Poultry rearing is one of those things which requires personal supervision, and in my opinion it is one of the principal things where small holders have a considerable advantage.

7390. You think that there is a considerable opening for small holders in that direction?—Yes, for an extension. I should not like to see all small holdings devoted to poultry rearing, but it might be increased with advantage.

7391. I suppose the same condition as to proximity to a market would apply in the case of poultry as in the case of vegetables and fruit?—Eggs are not so perishable as fruit. We import a considerable number of eggs into our own county from France that might be produced at home, excepting in the month of March.

7392. You would not, I presume, go so far as to recommend the extension of small holdings for that purpose, unless they were near to a station?—Not expressly for that purpose. I look upon poultry as an auxiliary.

7393. As an auxiliary to fruit and vegetables?—Yes; and to cowkeeping.

7394. Provided that the land is suitable for the purpose?—Yes.

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Wednesday, 3rd July 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

MR. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. SAMUEL BENJAMIN LARGE DRUCE, M.A., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

7395. I BELIEVE you are a Master of Arts of Exeter College, Oxford?—Yes.

7396. And also a Barrister of Lincoln's Inn?—Yes.

7397. Are you a practising barrister?—Yes, I practice as a conveyancer and equity draftsman.

7398. And I believe you are secretary to the Farmers' Club?—I am.

7399. What Farmers' Club is that?—That is the Farmers' Club of London. It is one of the oldest farmers' clubs in the country. It was instituted in the year 1843. I have been secretary of it since 1876.

7400. And you have been an Assistant Commissioner under the Duke of Richmond's Agricultural Commission?—Yes.

7401. As such, what were your duties?—I had to report upon the agriculture of the 15 eastern and eastern-midland counties of England, running from the Thames up to the Humber. Derbyshire was my most western county.

7402. Can you refer us to the Blue Book in which your reports are to be found?—Yes; I have the Blue Books here. My first report is in the Blue Book of 1881 [C., 2778-II.], at pages 361 to 383, and from page 384 to 392. I may point out that the report from page 384 to 392 especially relates to small holdings; more especially to small holdings in Lincolnshire, upon which I had special instructions to report. Then I wrote another report, which is published separately, 1882 [C., 3375-II.]. That also contains, in various places, reference to small holdings.

7403. Were you specially instructed to make any particular inquiries in reference to small freeholders?—Yes; in Lincolnshire especially.

7404. And did you write a special report upon that branch of the subject?—I did; that is the one to which I have alluded; the 1881 report, beginning at page 384.

7405. And since the time when you ceased to be an Assistant Commissioner have you continued to take an interest in the question?—Yes, I have; I have written pamphlets and read papers on the subject.

Chairman—continued.

7406. I understand that you wish to divide the subject into certain heads; the first of which is whether, in recent years, there has been any diminution in the number of small owners and cultivators of land?—Yes; I have taken your reference and sub-divided it into four heads; that is the first of them.

7407. First of all, as to the small owners?—As regards small owners, the difficulty that one labours under is that there are no statistics of small owners, or, indeed, of large ones, from which any general comparison may be drawn; but the general impression certainly throughout the country is that there has been a diminution of them. For instance, it is said that the statesmen of Cumberland and Westmorland have, to a great extent, ceased to exist.

7408. Then what do you say with regard to Lincolnshire?—According to my own observations, I think there has been no diminution at all in small holdings in that county; for, apparently, the numbers in the Isle of Axholme, and also on the east coast of Lincolnshire, are very much the same, so far as one can judge from reports, as they were 100 years ago, when Arthur Young reported on them. So in Cambridgeshire.

7409. Does that also apply to Huntingdonshire and Norfolk?—To a great extent. Perhaps I may read from my report for 1882, at page 14, about some small ownerships in Cambridgeshire. "In the north-eastern part of the county, near Wisbeach, some few small occupying owners are found." Then I give the numbers of them in that parish, and go on to say that "during the last 25 years 5,780 acres of land in the same parish had been sold by 22 different owners, and that the same lands were then held by 51 different owners. This parish, my informant stated, might be considered as typical of the district, in which the transfer of land by sale had been very general during

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Chairman—continued.

during the period above named; it shows that in this locality, at all events, the tendency has not been for the smaller properties to be absorbed into the larger ones."

7410. What do you understand by the words "small owners"?—I have taken it as 50 acres, and under.

7411. Then generally speaking, with the exception of Cumberland and Westmorland, your opinion is that there has not been any great, if any, diminution amongst the small owners?—That is my opinion.

7412. Have you any opinion as to owners owning more than 50 acres?—Yes, I think there has been a considerable diminution in the number of owners of somewhat larger properties, say the 100 to 200 or 300 acre men; the yeomen.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7413. Fifty to 100 you skip?—I hardly like to draw the line so very closely as that; but I certainly think that the small owners of somewhere about 100, and from that to 300 acres, the yeomen as they are generally called, have materially diminished in number throughout the country.

Chairman.

7414. And what, in your opinion, has been the cause of that diminution? — This: that the profits and the money to be made from the employment of capital in trade and business are so much greater than from the employment of capital in land; that these men owning and being able to realise moderate capitals, have sold their properties, and have invested the proceeds in trade and businesses. Then we must remember, too, that there were great inducements to them to sell some 15 years ago, because land was up considerably in value. That was a great inducement, and a great number, I think, sold at that time in consequence.

7415. Then you think that these men sold in the good times, when they got a good price for their land?—I think a great many did.

7416. And so far, I understand, you have been speaking of small owners?—Yes.

7417. Now with regard to small cultivators, what is your opinion as to their increase or diminution?—There we have absolute figures to guide us; the Agricultural Returns for 1880, which also contain a reference to the Agricultural Returns of 1875, on Table 6, give the percentage of the total number of holdings in England of 50 acres and under; in 1875, 71 per cent. and in 1880 the same, 71 per cent. Travelling onward, the Agricultural Returns for 1886, in Table 15, give the percentage of the number of 50 acres and under as 71·04, which figures show that so far as the holdings of 50 acres and under are concerned, there has been no change.

7418. That includes holdings of 50 acres to one acre, does it; or does it go below the one acre?—The last returns go below one acre.

7419. Does that include allotments?—There is a note to the returns, which says that there may be some confusion between the number of

Chairman—continued.

allotments and the number of strictly so-called small holdings. I am not sure whether the earlier returns include allotments or not. There was no special allotment return until a later time. The note to which I referred is on page 5 of the Introduction: "Concerning the smaller holdings under five acres in extent, it should be explained that, as the Holdings Returns are derived from the Schedules of 1885, whereas the Allotment Returns have been obtained in the present year, it is probable that many holdings in the class containing those of a quarter of an acre, but under four acres, such as would be perhaps ordinarily termed field allotments, are also included in the Allotments Return."

7420. Then those figures you have just quoted show that, practically, the small farms have remained about stationary? — Yes, they remain about stationary. Supplementing that, in 1870 I find that 52 per cent. of the number of holdings were under 20 acres, and, in 1885, 56 per cent.

7421. Then that shows that the increase has been very slight amongst the smallest holdings? —Yes, it does.

7422. Have you been able to arrive at all at the average size of a farm, and compare that in one period with another?—Yes; the average size of a farm in England in 1875 was 58½ acres. and, in 1885, 60 acres.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7423. Farms?—Yes; I am entirely addressing myself to farms now.

7424. Does that exclude villas? — I do not think it does. It probably does not. It includes them, I should think. I am using the word "farms," as distinguished from "ownerships."

Sir *Walter Foster.*

7425. Land that is let?—Land that is let, as distinguished from land that is owned.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7426. How would a 99 years' lease be entered? —You puzzle me; I do not know really.

7427. The majority of villas are on 99 years' leases, are they not?—I do not know how that is.

Chairman.

7428. What figures have you based this average upon? — I have taken these averages from the Agricultural Returns.

7429. Then those figures, if they are worth anything, show that the tendency has been slightly to increase the size of farms?—Yes, very slightly. The difference is accounted for, I believe, by the increase in the actual cultivated area; the actual amount, that is to say, which is included in the returns for each year as cultivated land.

7430. Can you generalise at all as to the different sorts of land which will be found either in large farms or small farms? — Yes. Speaking very generally, I think the small farms will be found in the grass counties, and near the manufacturing centres, and near towns where there is a good market for the

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Chairman—continued.

articles which the small cultivators particularly grow.

7431. Assuming that there has been a diminution both in the number of owners and of cultivators, do you connect that diminution in any way with existing legislation? — No, I do not. On the contrary, it appears to me that, taking the small cultivators, the legislation of the last few years would rather tend to their increase. For instance, we have the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883. That Act applies to quite small farms or holdings, whereas the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1875 did not apply to holdings that were under two acres. Then again we have the Allotments Compensation Act, which gives compensation to the small occupiers.

7432. Do you think that the law of settlement has in any way tended to prevent land being bought by small owners?—I think the Law of Settlement previously to the passing of the Settled Land Act may have had that effect.

7433. Then do you think that the Settled Land Act (that is Lord Cairns' Act) has diminished any tendency that there was to prevent land going into the market?—Yes, I do most certainly. It appears to me that under the Settled Land Act all land, with some very few exceptions, such as the mansion house and grounds around it, may now be sold readily, and there is no law, in my opinion, to stop the sale of settled land.

7434. Can you give any instance in which the Settled Land Act has been of service?—Yes, I can. I have here the particulars and conditions of sale of some property in Oxfordshire, which formed part of the Duke of Marlborough's settled estates.

7435. That was sold under the Settled Land Act?—I believe so.

7436. In what sized lots was the land put up?—Out of 39 lots, 22 are under 10 acres in size.

7437. Have you found that the costs of conveyance have been a difficulty in the way of small men obtaining land? — Yes, they were to a certain extent; but I find that in this very case there is this condition of sale: "At the request of the Duke of Marlborough, and for the convenience of purchasers of small lots, the vendors' solicitors will, if desired, prepare the necessary conveyances of the freehold properties at the following rate, excluding stamp and plan, namely, where the purchase-money does not exceed 100 *l.*, 3 *l.*; exceeding 100 *l.* and not exceeding 300 *l.*, 5 *l.*" Then I supplement that by saying that some part of the property that was bought at that sale was very shortly afterwards put up for sale by the man who bought it in still smaller lots, and that then there was a condition of sale that "for the convenience of purchasers the vendors' solicitor will prepare and complete the necessary conveyances of the several lots, including stamp and plan, for 2 *l.* 5 *s.* each lot."

7438. What is the cost of stamp where the purchase-money does not exceed 100 *l.*?—

Chairman—continued.

Ten shillings, and 30 *s.* for 300 *l.* Then I may perhaps supplement that by a reference to my report on the small holdings of Lincolnshire, at page 387 of my 1881 Report. I found that settlements of land in the Isle of Axholme were very very rare indeed; and I go on in this way: "In the first place, settlements being, as I have stated, rare, the titles to land are less complicated than they otherwise would be; and in the second place, it is the custom to sell land with a condition which stipulates that the last purchase deed shall form the root of title, and sales being frequent, titles thus limited are not long." Thus the costs were moderate; and, moreover, the purchasers being, as a rule, local men, employed local solicitors, by whom, in fact, most of the titles are well known, and I had no complaints as regards the cost of conveying land in the Isle of Axholme.

7439. Now, with regard to the Enclosure Acts, I had better just tell you shortly what has been said here. It has been said that the effect of the Enclosure Acts has been to deprive small men, who formerly had a right of pasturage, and so on, of those rights; and, in fact, to degrade them from the position of small owners to that of mere labourers, the compensation which they received being inadequate to the rights which they gave up under the Enclosure awards. What have you to say upon that question? — Of course I cannot tell what the actual amount of the compensation was, but I have not been able to find one single case of complaint; and as regards the effect of the Enclosure Acts increasing or decreasing the number of small owners of land, I think it can hardly be disputed that they must have increased the number. I refer especially on that head to the 32nd Annual Report of the Enclosure Commissioners, which is dated in the year 1877, and which gives practically the result of 30 years' working of the General Enclosure Act of 1845, and with your permission, if it is not detaining the Committee too long, I should like to read an extract from that Report: "Since the passing of that Act in 1845, during the administration of Sir Robert Peel, more than 30 years ago, nearly 600,000 acres of common and commonable lands have been dealt with. This has been divided among about 26,000 separate owners, in an average proportion of 44¾ acres to each lord of the manor, 24 acres to each common-right owner, and 10 acres to each purchaser of the lands sold to defray part of the expenses." The Committee will no doubt remember that the Commissioners had power to order a sale of part of the land to defray the expenses of an inclosure. "In many cases the expenses were raised by rate among the persons interested, but this was optional, since such persons had the alternative of selling a portion of the land for that purpose. With that object 35,450 acres were sold, chiefly in small lots, to 3,500 purchasers. The lords of the manors, 620 in number, received as compensation for their rights in the soil, as an average, about one-fifteenth of the acreage of the wastes. These wastes of manors were, under the Act of 1845, made subject to the setting out of allotments for public purposes, and in this respect were distinct from

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Chairman—continued.

from the commonable lands, which are undivided property, and were not made subject to public allotments. As this is the largest and most general distribution of land into small properties that has taken place in this country in recent times, it may be a matter of some interest to know the quality and occupation of the persons into whose hands these lands have passed. To discover this, the legal description, both of allottees and of purchasers of sale allotments, has been taken from inclosures in which that description is given, one in each of the following counties, namely, Bucks. Cumberland, Chester, Devon, Essex, Hants, Herts, Lancaster, Norfolk, Oxford, Stafford, Sussex, Worcester, and, in Wales, Carnarvon and Carmarthen. Upon this basis, and so far as such an average can be accepted, the proportionate numbers of the different classes of the 26,000 landowners amongst whom the land has been divided are as follows: yeomen and farmers, 4,736; shopkeepers and tradesmen, 3,456; labourers and miners, 3,168; esquires, 2,624; widows, 2,016; gentlemen, 1,984; clergymen, 1,280; artizans, 1,067; spinsters, 800; charity trustees, .704; peers, baronets, and sons of peers, 576; professional men, 512; and about 3,000 others in gradually diminishing proportions, but comprising nearly every quality and calling, from the Crown to the mechanic, quarryman, and domestic servant. The influence of this change has not been confined to particular counties, but has been more or less felt in all. It has made an appreciable addition to the number of small landholders in England, bringing upon hitherto comparatively unproductive wastes the individual interest and intelligence of a numerous and varied body of persons by whose industry the best of these lands have been made not only useful to their owners, but have become available for sale and purchase, and, in their improved condition, for bearing their just share of county and parish rates and public taxes. More than 2,000 miles of public roads have been constructed at the cost of the common-right owners, in addition to the numerous accommodation roads set out for their special use in giving convenient access to their several allotments. Other works of a public nature, such as embanking and straightening the course of rivers connected with inclosures, have been executed. The total estimated value of the wastes inclosed amounts to 6,140,000 *l.* The value of the land taken from the best of this for public purposes (comprising land for recreation, field-gardens, public quarries, fuel, schools and churches, burial-grounds, and other purposes, and public roads) has been estimated at 282,140 *l.* To this must be added the cash raised by rate or sale of property, and expended on the construction of public roads and other public works connected with inclosures, 473,500 *l.*, making together, 755,640 *l.* Comparing this with the fee-simple value above mentioned, it appears that nearly one-eighth of the whole value of the wastes inclosed has, under the direction of the Commissioners, and with the assent of the proprietary interests, been devoted to objects of public utility and convenience. Thus, in the course of one generation, an extent

Chairman—continued.

of land equal to that of a county has been redeemed from common and waste, and has been divided among a far larger and more varied body of landowners than that of any county in England. Valuable public roads of great extent have been constructed, opening up for business and pleasure many otherwise inaccessible localities, and at no cost to the public. The area of production and employment has been increased, and in the same proportion, that of public and local taxation has been extended. A great number of small landed properties have been created, and labourers' field-gardens in the rural districts have been afforded in larger proportion to the extent of the land than appear by the Agricultural Returns to exist elsewhere in England."

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

7440. Do you give the acreage apportioned to the lords of the manor and each of the other classes. You give the number and qualities of the people; can you give the acreage?—I have the report here.

7441. You cannot say how much of the 600,000 acres were given to the lords of the manor?—"The lords of the manors, 620 in number, received as compensation for their rights in the soil, as an average, about one-fifteenth of the acreage of the wastes."

Chairman.

7442. Then you quote that report as proving that the large amount of land which before that time was not available for the small people, has, through the operation of that Act, become available for them?—Yes; and not only available, but actually allotted and apportioned to them. I have looked at very many special Inclosure Acts, and I cannot see any difference in their results from that of the General Act of 1845.

7443. Then with regard to conveyancing. Has the system of conveyancing been cheapened of late years?—Yes; as we know to our cost. A 40 years' title now is only required instead of 60, and deeds are very much shortened. There are no general words in a deed after the parcels; and the simple expression, "as beneficial owner," in the conveying part of the deed. implies the old long covenants for title.

7444. Do you find in the country that solicitors charge a rate less than that allowed by the Act?—Yes, I have found that in many cases the competition amongst solicitors produces that effect.

7445. What is the cause of that competition you say?—I remember hearing the Isle of Axholme called "a solicitor's paradise," because of the amount of land that changed hands there, and consequently of the amount of work put into the solicitors' hands.

7446. You think that the solicitors in their own interests (the interest of their pockets)

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Chairman—continued.

would be anxious to keep land as far as possible in small holdings?—I do.

7447. Now with regard to small farms; what have you to say?—I know of no legislation that prevents an owner from letting his land in small occupations.

7448. Then what is the difficulty that stands in his way? — The difficulty is certainly not the law. It is very likely the lack of necessary buildings, and the costs that would be entailed upon the owner in sub-dividing and in building; but even in that respect again, legislation, it seems to me, has helped him, because he can borrow money for those purposes under the Improvement Acts, or, as regards a settled estate, by the Settled Land Act, he can sell a part of the estate, and spend a part of the purchase-money in the necessary houses and buildings on the remainder. That is specially provided for by the 25th Section, the 11th Subsection of the Act of 1882. Then, again, that same Act allows him to grant leases as a tenant for life, which he could not do before. Then, again, under the Conveyancing Act, 1881, if land is mortgaged, the mortgagor has a power of granting valid leases, which previously to that Act he had not; the mortgagee before that time must have been a necessary party to a valid lease.

7449. The lease being one not exceeding 21 years?—Yes; of agricultural land.

7450. Are you familiar with the proposal that has been made before this Committee by several witnesses, and contained in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, to enable local authorities to step in and assist small men to obtain holdings?—Yes; I have read some Bills on the subject; I do not think I have had the opportunity of reading Mr. Collings' Bill of this Session, but I have read his Bills of previous Sessions.

7451. What remarks have you to offer upon those proposals?—I think it is a very imprudent proposition, and an impolitic one to advance money for either of those purposes.

7452. Why imprudent?—My main reason is that if you do it you destroy at once the independence of the class; and I think that by creating small holdings in this way you will actually do away with all that gives small holdings their great value at the present time. If I may paraphrase the Latin, I should say it is *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*

7453. How will you make men less independent if you enable them to have a bit of land out of which they can earn something towards an increase of their weekly wages?—I say that now any man can do that; and I say that if instead of depending upon himself and his thrifty and industrious habits to get the money to buy that land, you enable him to go to some authority to borrow the money, you do away with the habits of thrift and industry; you tend to make him lean upon the rates or taxes rather than upon his own exertions.

7454. Is not the price which the man would have to pay now so great as to prevent him altogether attempting to get the money together to purchase a small holding? — Not in my opinion; certainly not. I think there is hardly a country parish in England, as far as my knowledge is concerned, where you cannot find men who have been enabled to save money as agricultural labourers, or otherwise, and have bought land, and have done well with it. I came across scores; I might almost say hundreds.

7455. In the eastern counties?—Yes; and in my own native district, Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

7456. But are not the wages very low?—No, not specially low. I worked out a table of wages throughout England in 1885, in a paper for the Royal Agricultural Society, which is the last return I know. The wages in Oxfordshire ran from 11 *s.*; they are probably a shilling lower than that, about 10 *s.* a week now.

7457. Then do you say that out of 10 *s.* a week a man can provide for his wife and family, and in addition lay by sufficient to buy for himself a small holding?—No; the 10 *s.* is the actual money wage, and nothing else, the actual money that is paid to him; but the agricultural labourer has many other things given to him by way of remuneration besides that.

7458. Then you say that you think it would make him less independent, and also that it would be an imprudent thing to do. Imprudent for whom, do you mean?—I think it would be attempting to benefit one class at the expense of the rest of us. Then again, there is another very great objection, I think, to putting any power of this sort in the hands of any local body, and that is that you put such a temptation in their way to become land speculators and land jobbers.

7459. You think they would let their land, not to the most deserving man, but to the man who would pay the highest rent for it?—Yes, it may be so. In fact, I suppose, they would be obliged to do that.

7460. But, supposing that by Act of Parliament they were limited in the choice of those to whom they could let or sell the land in small plots?—Then I should say that would be very unfair to the rest.

7461. Do not you think that under some such scheme as Mr. Jesse Collings has proposed, that there would be ample inducement left for thrift and saving?—I think Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal was to advance three-fourths of the purchase-money, was it not?

7462. Yes; that the small holder should pay down a quarter of the purchase-money, and that the rest should be advanced by the local authority?—I do not think that that would be sufficient to keep it up; you see he would know that he could get three-quarters of what he wanted instead of working hard and earning sufficient himself to make his whole purchase. All he would need do would be to get sufficient to obtain the quarter.

7463. Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal is, as perhaps you are aware, that the small holder should never become the actual freeholder of the holding; that he should always be subject to a perpetual quit-rent, and that he should be limited in such a way that he should not be able to subdivide his holding or use it for any other purposes

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Chairman—continued.

poses but agricultural purposes; have you any remarks to make upon that?—If it was carried out, the latter would be very good indeed; in fact, I should think it could hardly be done without; but as regards making him the freeholder, subject to a perpetual quit-rent, I am not quite sure that it is a good thing. Those rents, although not heavy in the first instance, yet, nevertheless, remain, and the man has to provide for that quit-rent every year. I think he is somewhat trammelled.

7464. Do you think that he would prefer to feel that after paying a rent for a certain number of years he should become absolute owner of the land?—I think that would be better if it is to be done at all. I certainly should be inclined to do it in that way. I think it is fairer to the men. I think an owner who is an encumbered owner (because after all that would be his case) is in a false position, and a position which gives him a great deal of, it may be, trouble and anxiety; but my great difficulty is Mr. Collings' proposal to prevent mortgaging. It is no use at all, in my humble opinion, to create small proprietors, unless you prevent them mortgaging. Taking many of those cases I have referred to in Lincolnshire, you see over and over again that that is so. Here is a case of one man at New Leake who owned 10 acres (this is at page 387 of my 1881 Report): "One man, M., owned 10 acres, with a house and buildings upon it. He paid 680 *l.* for his land without the house or buildings, of which sum he had borrowed 400 *l.* at 4 per cent. per annum interest. He built his house and farm buildings at a cost of about 170 *l.*, and in all he had spent 900 *l.* on his land, house, and buildings. He grew wheat, mustard, and potatoes." This is what he told me himself: "Had I to live by the land alone," he said, "I could not make both ends meet"; and over and over again I found that, I will not say the ruin, but the great drawback to these men, was the fact that their lands were so deeply mortgaged. I go into it at some detail on page 389. In fact, it was quite an exception to find any small freeholder whose land was not mortgaged. Then we come to this: that the mortgagees, who are often trustees, cannot give the man time and forego their interest on the mortgage, as a landlord can forego his rent; and so really the small owner, with his land mortgaged, and having always to pay up the interest on that mortgage, is in a worse predicament by far than a tenant.

7465. But then Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal is, as I understand it, with a view to obviating the possibility of the small owner mortgaging, because he would have nothing to mortgage except the quarter of the purchase money which he had paid up?—Yes; but I presume he could mortgage that; he might mortgage that.

7466. He might mortgage that?—And he might mortgage, I presume, his improved value. I think that unless you stop mortgaging altogether you would land these people in very great difficulties. That is the result of my inquiries, and of course it is for Parliament in its wisdom to consider whether you should so infringe the ordinary liberty of a British subject as to prevent his mortgaging his land or raising money upon it.

Chairman—continued.

7467. Do you think that the annual perpetual quit-rent which the holder would have to pay to the local authority would be a charge something in the nature of a mortgage which could not be diminished, and which he would be subject to pay every year, year by year, whether it was a good or a bad season?—I take it that the local authority would not be able to forego that at any time. They would have to insist upon it.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7468. Do you mean that they would have to insist upon the quit-rent?—I apprehend so. That is my idea.

Chairman.

7469. Then, in your opinion, I understand you think that a small man can do better by renting land than by attempting to become the owner of it?—I do. Suppose a man has 500 *l.*; I think he will be much better off if he occupies 50 acres than if he purchased 10 and occupies them: I put it in this way, suppose after payment of the rent, say 1 *l.* an acre, you put his profits at 1 *l.* an acre, that is 50 *l.* Now, the owner, on the other hand, would pay, we will say, in these days 40 *l.* an acre for his land; for 10 acres that is 400 *l.* Then he would have his 100 *l.* left for his farming capital. Now you put his profits just at the same, 1 *l.* an acre; that is 10 *l.* Then, of course, you must add the rent that he would pay; putting that at the same his whole profits would be 20 *l.* as against 50 *l.*

7470. Then with regard to buildings, what do you say?—With regard to buildings, they proportionately are far more expensive in the case of small farms than in the case of larger ones. Suppose we take a 500-acre farm; you could build your farmhouse for 500 *l.*, and you would want about 1,500 *l.* for your buildings, that is an outlay of 2,000 *l.* Suppose you split that farm into 50 farms of 10 acres each; you get the cost of your house, 150 *l.*, and the cost of your buildings, at least 100 *l.*, that is 250 *l.*; if you multiply that by the 50, it is 12,500 *l.* Or, if you split it into 20 farms of 25 acres each, your house will cost about the same, and your buildings rather more. I put down 200 *l.* for the buildings, that is 350 *l.* in all; so that on the 20 farms you would spend 7,000 *l.* instead of the 2,000 *l.*, as in the case of the large farm. Then of course there are other things to be considered, if you sub-divide your land; your fences cost a considerable amount, your occupation roads cost something, and your gates cost something. I have taken the amounts that those items cost from a paper that I daresay is familiar to you, that was written by Mr. Pell for the "Royal Agricultural Society's Journal" two years ago, called "The Making of the Land in England"; and taking the figures there which he quotes from a number of estates, the fences would cost 1 *s.* 3 *d.* a yard, gates about 2 *l.* a-piece, and the occupation roads from 3 *s.* to

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Chairman—continued.

3 *s.* to 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a yard, and all those have to be put down in addition to buildings and houses.

7471. With regard to the produce from a small farm as compared with the produce of a large farm, what observations have you to offer upon that?—With regard to the produce of the small farms, I do not think a man and his family can live comfortably on 10 acres. I have taken some figures out, which are mainly taken from a table of accounts that was put in by one of the occupants of the Minster Lovell allotments (I think you have had some gentlemen from Minster Lovell before you). They are quoted in my late colleague's (Mr. Doyle's) reports, on page 773. They were given to him by one of the then occupants, and taking the figures proportionately to 10 acres, the results on the 10-acre farm come to something like between 25 *l.* and 30 *l.* a year profit, which is not a very large sum; it is under 12 *s.* a week.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7472. Is that without making any allowance for food consumed by the occupant?—Yes.

7473. That assumes everything as of money value?—Yes.

Chairman.

7474. I think you have some figures to put in. Where are your figures taken from which I find in this statement, comparing the produce of England with other countries?—Those figures are taken from a paper which was read before the Statistical Society by Major Craigie (who I think has been a witness already before you) last year. He took them, I believe, from the Agricultural Returns. I will hand in the table, if you please.

7475. If you please. I am not sure whether he put them in or not; but it will be as well to have them?—These are the figures:

Name of County.	Yield of Wheat per Acre.	Yield of Barley per Acre.	Yield of Potatoes per Acre.
	Bushels	*Bushels.*	*Bushels.*
United Kingdom -	28·8	34·1	176·0
Austria - -	15·7	13·5	109·4
Hungary - -	11·5	13·6	38·1
France - - -	15·3	18·7	113·9
Germany - -	18·9	—	—
Holland - -	21·4	41·9	172·8
Belgium - -	25·9	34·0	—
Italy - - -	11·9	—	—
Sweden - - -	—	—	123·7

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7476. Does that table give also the acres cultivated in each country?—No, it does not.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

7477. It only compares cultivated acres of one country with the cultivated acres of another?—It compares the produce per acre of barley, wheat, and potatoes in the various countries.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7478. Cultivated land?—Yes, cultivated land.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7479. It does not give the acreage of cultivated and uncultivated land?—No, it does not.

Chairman.

7480. Then, I think, you have a table also which shows the number of horses, of cattle, of sheep, and of pigs, upon the different sized holdings; where have you obtained those figures from?—They are from the Agricultural Returns. They are taken from the table I hold in my hand. I have tabulated the number of horses, the number of cattle, the number of sheep, and the number of pigs on the various sized holdings.

7481. I think you may hand in that table also; it is in a convenient form, and you might just briefly tell us what the deduction is that you make from that table?—The table is as follows:

Size of Holdings.	Number of Horses.	Number of Cattle.	Number of Sheep.	Number of Pigs.
One acre and not exceeding 5 acres	74	300	299	493
Above 5 acres and not exceeding 20 acres	56	314	316	221
„ 20 „ „ 50 „	53	272	443	136
„ 50 „ „ 100 „	49	228	509	91
„ 100 „ „ 300 „	43	196	622	67
„ 300 „ „ 500 „	38	149	843	51
„ 500 „ „ 1,000 „	33	113	1,032	42
Above 1,000 acres - - -	26	82	1,078	29

The deduction I draw from that is, that as it is clear and self-evident that the larger the holding the greater the number of sheep (for instance, the number of sheep per 1,000 acres of land in holdings, we will say, of from five to 20 acres, was 316; but between 500 and 1,000, 1,032), it seems to me that as regards the production of mutton, the larger holdings show a better return than the smaller ones. As regards cattle, a similar result is not by any means so clear; on the contrary, the number of cattle, that is to say, horned stock, including cows, of course, as well as oxen and bullocks, in farms of 500 to 1,000 acres, are 112 head per 1,000 acres; whereas between holdings of five and 20 acres, 314 per 1,000 acres. That of course shows a greater number of cattle on the smaller farms. The cattle include, as I say, cows; and therefore as regards the entirety, it is in favour of the small farms undoubtedly; but as regards so many of those cattle as are fatted to produce beef, I am quite confident that if the figures could

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Chairman—continued.

could be analysed, we should find that the larger farms produce far more beef for the country than the smaller ones. That, I think, is apparent to the eye as one travels about, and there is also a very simple reason for it; that is this: that beef cannot be produced without a considerable expenditure on artificial foods, and as a rule the smaller farmers are not in a position to buy those artificial foods, whereas the larger ones are. Of course it is a great deal cheaper to buy in bulk than small quantities.

7482. Is it not also the fact that, as regards pigs and as regards horses, there are more on the small holdings than on the large?—Certainly; but as regards horses, that tells in favour of the large holdings, because you do not eat horses, and it seems to me that it is a waste of expenditure to have 56 horses per 1,000 acres on the 20 acre farms; whereas you have 33 on the farms of between 500 and 1,000 acres. The horse is an animal you use for work and power.

7483. Do not these horses include all horses; not only horses for work on the farm, but horses that are bred for riding and driving purposes?—Yes, they may do that.

7484. There is no means of distinguishing the one from the other in the Agricultural Returns?—No, not in the Agricultural Returns.

7485. And as regards pigs?—As regards pigs, undoubtedly the small holdings are in excess of the large ones; but then, of course, we must remember that those holdings, as I have already stated, include a good many suburban holdings, and also, as I pointed out in answer to your question, some of the allotments; and there, of course, we have the small men keeping their pigs.

7486. It has been pointed out to us by different witnesses that the small holding is very suitable for the growth of fruit and vegetables. What is your experience upon that point?—Undoubtedly they are adapted for fruit and vegetables; but I think the evidence goes to show that the great increase in the growth of fruit and vegetables which has taken place in the last 50 years in this country is owing to the fact that both fruit and vegetables have been grown on the larger occupations, especially fruit. I think that comes out in Mr. Whitehead's paper, in the Royal Agricultural Society's Journal of this year.

7487. Will you just give us the reference to that?—The reference is, Volume 25, Part 1, page 156. I have it here if you would like to have it.

7488. I think if you give us the reference that will be sufficient?—It begins at page 156.

7489. And the gist of his paper, as I understand you, is, that the area under fruit and vegetables has enormously increased in consequence of fruit and vegetables being cultivated now upon large holdings?—That is the gist of his paper as regards fruit, but only as regards fruit. He does not touch vegetables.

7490. Have you anything to say with regard to the saving of labour upon large as compared with small holdings?—The result of my inquiries was that the small farms employ a larger number of labourers per acre than the larger ones. I made a table about that in my report to the Duke of Richmond's Commission, on pages 390, 391, for Lincolnshire. I there found that one labourer was employed for every—

Chairman—continued.

2½	acres,	in the	case of	holdings	under	5	acres.
7¼	,,	,,	,,	from	5	to	10 acres.
14¾	,,	,,	,,	,,	10	,,	20 ,,
46¼	,,	,,	,,	,,	300	,,	350 ,,
57¾	,,	,,	,,	,,	500	,,	600 ,,
41¾	,,	,,	,,	,,	1,000	,,	1,200 ,,

The figures from which that table is made are taken from the 1871 Census Returns; there are no similar figures in the 1881 census from which I could work them out.

7491. I can understand that as the size of the farm increases machinery is more used, and therefore labour is not so much required; but how do you account for this somewhat striking fact, that upon farms of from 500 acres to 600 acres, one labourer is employed upon 57¾ acres; but that upon farms of from 1,000 acres to 1,200 acres more labourers are required, because it appears that one is employed upon 41¾ acres?—That is very curious, but those were the figures. I really am unable to account for it. Those are the actual figures. They worked out so.

7492. Then I suppose the small man is unable to use machinery?—Yes, I say that the small man is unable to use machinery, because it is such a heavy cost to him. Suppose you take a drill, a very plain, common implement; every farmer has a drill; well a drill would cost, we will say, 28 *l.* to 30 *l.* Upon a small holding of 30 acres, that is 1 *l.* an acre; but that very same machine would do for a 400-acre or 500-acre farm; and it would represent 1 *s.* 6 *d.* an acre on 400 acres.

7493. But cannot that machine be used upon other holdings besides the holding which belongs to the owner of the machine?—Undoubtedly it can; but you must remember that farming operations will not wait, that they must be done at a particular time, and that all the men, assuming half-a-dozen of them took this drill, would all want it at the same time.

7494. But then, even supposing a very large holding of 1,000 acres, you could not sow all the acres at the same time?—No, not quite at the same time certainly; still you would have command of it whenever you wanted it. Then, again, as regards the more expensive labour-saving machines, they are, to a great extent, beyond the purchasing power of a small farmer, and he has to hire them; a threshing machine, or an engine, or an elevator, for example.

7495. Would it not be possible for the men to combine?—Oh, yes; of course it is possible; but the man who is his own master of the machine is very much better placed. There are cases of combination. There is one in the small occupations in Buckinghamshire, Mr. Henley's, which I describe in my report. "In threshing, the tenants help each other; two or more of them hire a steam engine and threshing machine between them, and each man looks after his own corn, and takes care that his crop is kept separate from his neighbour's." Mr. Henley, on those

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Chairman—continued.

allotments, has a sort of master man who sees that the corn brought in by the different tenants is kept separate and distinct. "If a difficulty arises between any two or more tenants who want to use the barn at the same time, the difficulty is settled by Mr. Henley's woodman, who also acts as general overseer of the allotments." It can be done undoubtedly.

7496. Then I understand you to contend also that the large farmers have improved breeds of stock very much more than the small farmers can possibly have done?—Yes, I do. I say that the large farmers have improved the breeds of stock to such an extent now, that to England alone, of any other country in the world, do people come from all over the world to buy our stock, our Shorthorns, our Herefords, and our other cattle; our Lincoln and Cotswold sheep, and our Shire horses. I should like to quote Arthur Young if I may.

7497. Yes, you may just read that sentence?—"England has made, upon the whole, a much greater progress in agriculture than any other country in Europe, and great farms have absolutely done the whole, insomuch that we have not a capital improvement that is ever found in small ones. Deduct from agriculture all the practices that have made it flourishing in this island, and you have precisely the management of small farms."

7498. I suppose you would hold that what we require is all sorts of different sized farms according to the particular soil and district?—Most certainly; that is my idea. I think that we require all sizes, and that we have them.

7499. And that it is desirable, I suppose, to allow natural and economic causes to settle which are to be large, and which are to be small?—That is my idea.

7500. And that it is undesirable by legislation to interfere with the natural result of economic laws?—That is entirely my view. I think that small holdings are most excellent institutions. I think that the small owner and the small farmer are to be upheld; but I do not think they are to be artificially fostered.

7501. I also understand you to say that there are numerous instances in which the small men have, without any legislative assistance, pushed their own way and bought their small holdings?—Yes, I go so far as to say you can hardly find a country parish in which you would not find one or more examples of that.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7502. You said just now that you are in favour of small holdings; but that you do not wish them to be artificially fostered?—Yes.

7503. Do not you think that the law has rather tended to increase large farms?—No, I do not.

7504. Has it not been historically true that there has always been a complaint of small holdings diminishing. Has not that complaint always been present?—No, I do not think so.

7505. There is a general idea at the present time, is there not, that small holdings have been diminishing in number?—Yes; one hears it said, and constantly repeated.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

7506. Then historically, if you go back, speaking of 200 years or 300 years ago, there was always a complaint that small holdings were diminishing, and that the land was getting into the hands of large owners?—My history does not bear me out in that.

7507. At all events do not you think that the number of small holdings has very considerably decreased as compared with the population?—As compared with the population.

7508. You gave us figures just now to show that in actual number the small holdings were not decreasing, but remaining pretty nearly stationary?—My figures refer to small occupations. I was careful to say that as regards small ownerships we have no figures to go upon.

7509. Although you have no figures to go upon, is it not your opinion, that, as compared with the population of the country some few years ago, the number of small holders and of small owners is relatively much smaller?—I have no definite figures to guide my answer to that; but arguing from the increased number of small owners that have been caused by the Inclosure Acts, and also arguing from the statement that I quoted as regards the Cambridgeshire parish, where the number of owners (the acreage remaining the same) had increased from 22 to 51 in 25 years, I should say that the number had increased relatively to the population; and most certainly, as regards the agricultural population, which you must remember has recently diminished.

7510. There has been evidence given before us, and, I think, it is now pretty well understood, that the diminution of the agricultural population is very much less than is usually supposed?—That I am familiar with, because I wrote a paper, which I hold in my hand, on the alteration in the distribution of the agricultural population in England and Wales between the returns of the Census in 1871 and 1881. I do not know what it is generally considered to be, but I think I am fairly familiar with the diminution, whatever it was.

7511. It is very small, indeed; I rather think I have your own paper in my mind at the present moment, when I say that it is only about 1 or 2 per cent.?—It is a most difficult comparison, I assure you. This paper gave me a great deal of trouble because, as I point out in the beginning of it, the classes into which the agricultural population were divided were so different in the two periods that it was most difficult to make a fair comparison; but so far as it was possible, I made it.

7512. Then in your view, having regard to the statistics which you gave upon the distribution in consequence of the Enclosure Acts, you consider that relatively to the population, as compared with the population of the country, say 100 years ago, the number of small owners has increased?—Well, it can but be a guess; but my own idea is that it is an increase, and not a decrease.

7513. Are you aware of the statistics, say of the number of freeholders in any given country, who gave their votes some 100 years ago, as compared

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

compared with the number of freeholders at the present time?—Yes, I was looking through an old register only the other day, for Oxfordshire.

7514. What were the figures they gave?—I cannot carry them in my head, but the number is small; it was a much smaller number then than now.

7515. Has there been an increase or decrease of freeholders?—According to the Parliamentary Register, a considerable increase.

7516. An increase of persons voting under the freehold qualification?—Yes, I think so.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

7517. Relatively to the increase of the population?—I do not understand the honourable gentleman's question to be that.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7518. Oh, yes; relatively to the increase of population?—Relatively to the increase of population?

7519. Yes?—I cannot say; I have not gone into it.

7520. I think you will find that those answers of yours will require a little reconsideration?—I have not gone into it.

7521. I understand that your opinion is, that small holdings are to be upheld, and are good things; but that you are against artificially fostering them?—Yes, quite so. That is my view.

7522. You are aware that small holdings have been extremely successful in certain places, notably the Channel Islands, France, and so on?—Certainly.

7523. Can you give any reason why they should not be similarly successful in this country?—I say that they are similarly successful in this country under similar circumstances. For instance, take the part of our country where there are small holdings, and where the climate is the same as the Channel Islands. Look at Cornwall; the potato growers, and so on, there; they are capital, if you get a good spot.

7524. You are aware that those are only a recent development?—In Cornwall?

7525. Yes?—Not very recent, I think. Then take another case, the lands that my colleague, Mr. Little, spoke of, that Sir Thomas Acland let out in small holdings; they are not so recent. I say that where the locality, the soil, and the surrounding circumstance are suitable, there small holdings will do.

7526. I quite agree with you; I do not dispute it for one moment?—You must not run away with the idea that I am not in favour of small holdings where they are suitable.

7527. A portion of your evidence rather tended, or rather led me to suppose, that you favoured large holdings as against small?—So I do, taking the country through.

7528. You think that fruit is better cultivated on large holdings?—I think so.

7529. For what reason?—I think that any business, no matter what it is, is better done, more profitably done on a large than on a small scale, and the growth of fruit equally with others. For instance, take the sale of it. The larger man has a much better chance of getting a good price for his fruit than a smallman. The small man is very much in the hands of middle men.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

7530. Do you think the figures you gave us, with regard to the number of cattle maintained on small holdings as compared with those maintained on large holdings, bear out the statement you have just made that (invariably, as I understand) all businesses are done better on a large scale than on a small scale?—I should say that better butter is made on the large farm, and that there is far less waste on the large than on the small; that it would be much better to use your separator in your good dairy on a large farm, than it would be for your small peasant proprietors to skim the milk.

7531. Might all the difficulties which you now advert to be met by co-operative dairies?—Co-operative dairies?

7532. Yes; butter factories, for example?—They have not altogether been a success. They were a fair success, but not successful altogether. You will find a long account of them in my report for Derbyshire, where I went into the matter at considerable length. They have not been such a success as, theoretically, they ought to be.

7533. I wish to recall you to what I asked you just now, that is, as to the statistics you yourself have put in as to the number of cattle on small farms. I ask you whether that does not militate against your statement that all businesses are necessarily conducted to greater profit on a large scale than on a small one?—No, I think not.

7534. You think not?—I think not.

7535. You expressed an opinion against small proprietors having the power of mortgaging. What reason have you for that?—My main reason is that the mortgagee is much more likely (and in fact does) to look much more sharply after the payment of his interest than an ordinary landlord does after the payment of his rent; and, besides, the man who has his property mortgaged is trammelled; he is not a free man as regards it.

7536. Does not the same argument also apply to large estates?—Very much; and more perhaps to moderate estates. Perhaps it applies more to the 300 to 500-acre yeomen than to any other class of men in the country.

7537. Has not the power of mortgaging rather prevented the more wide distribution of land?—No; I think not. On the contrary, I think that the forced sale by mortgagees (which, as we unfortunately know, has taken place often lately) has brought a great deal more land into the market, and the mortgagees will make the most they possibly can of it, and for that purpose they often split it up.

7538. Does it not very frequently happen that a man has an estate mortgaged or settled (the one is the same for this purpose as the other), and is unable to sell a portion of his estate in order to improve it, or to meet the wants of the

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

occasion, because the whole of the estate is under one mortgage?— That can easily be managed.

7539. I know it can easily be managed from the lawyer's point of view; but people who are not lawyers are rather afraid to go to them to put the law in operation?—Oh, that is their folly. Many a man would save a lot of money if he went to his lawyer soon enough, just the same as if he went to his doctor soon enough.

7540. But as a matter of fact are not estates very often held together on account of difficulty and expense in putting the law in force?—Not now-a-days, I think, since the Settled Land Act. If they are, the tenant for life is a most foolish man.

7541. But before the Settled Land Act you think it was so?—Undoubtedly; I think there was a good deal of force in the argument before the Settled Land Act.

7542. Now, let me ask you your opinion as a lawyer, whether the abolition of a power of charging land with a specific debt would not favour the distribution of land?—Do I quite understand you; the power of charging land?

7543. The power of charging land with any specific debt; that is to say, charging land with a mortgage for a specific debt. I ask whether the abolition of the power of doing that would not favour the distribution of land?—No, I think not.

7544. Why?—As I said before, I do not think the fact of the land being mortgaged prevents the land from being sold; therefore, the abolition of the power of mortgaging would not make any difference in that respect. The mortgagor at the present time you know can always sell by making the mortgagee a party to the sale, and paying him out of the purchase-money.

7545. But a man cannot sell a mortgaged estate. Supposing a man has mortgaged his estate for a term, say 15 years, and he wants to sell at the end of five years, it would interfere very greatly with the value of his estate, would it not?—Pardon me, I never heard of a mortgage for a term of 15 years.

7546. For a term?—No, a mortgage for a term, except it be a long term of years; for 1,000 years (or a very long term like that) is most unusual; in fact I never heard of it. I think it is unknown to our conveyancing law.

7547. Do you mean to say that people lend money upon land knowing that it will be paid off on six months' notice at any time; is that what you wish to convey?—That is the ordinary form of mortgage. You convey it absolutely. I am owner of the fee-simple, and you lend me 1,000 *l.* I convey the property absolutely to you.

7548. You do so in theory?—I do so in theory; and if I do not pay the interest every six months when it becomes due you have certain remedies against me. One of those gives you a power of sale.

7549. But I, as a trustee?—Oh, as a trustee.

7550. I, as a trustee, lending you money upon those terms would not lend the money with the knowledge that you were going to pay it off at any time on six months' notice?—Probably the trustee would not because of the inconvenience, but an individual might.

7551. But in practice do they do so?—Mortgages last a long time. I should think no mortgage ever lasted so short a time as six months. It is not worth the expense.

7552. We have rather diverged from my original question, which was whether the abolition of the power of charging land for a specific debt would not favour the distribution of land; you say you think not?—I think it would not; in fact, by mortgaging land you put it into the power of two persons to sell that land, the mortgagor and the mortgagee; if you do not you have only one, that is, the man who would be the mortgagor.

7553. In practice, have mortgaged estates or settled estates (which for this purpose are the same thing) been split up or not by reason of that law, or has it tended to preserve the aggregation of land?—I do not think mortgages have tended either one way or the other. Undoubtedly, as I have said, settlements did before the Settled Lands Act, but not mortgages, I think.

7554. Are you aware of the late Mr. Joseph Kay's opinion on that subject?—Yes, I have read Mr. Kay's book, but not for some time.

7555. Your views are in direct opposition to his, are they not?—I forget now what he said about mortgages.

7556. You said that you were averse to finding money for the purpose of assisting people to purchase small holdings, because it would prevent thrift; did I understand you rightly to say that?—I said it would tend, in my opinion, to prevent thrift.

7557. Why would it tend more to prevent thrift than if they obtained the necessary loan from private sources; why would the fact of their obtaining it from a public source tend to that?—Because the one would be certain; the other uncertain.

7558. Would not that have exactly the contrary effect; the man would not be thrifty for an uncertainty, but might be thrifty for a certainty?—Yes, he might be thrifty for an uncertainty, because he would not be sure that he could get this money; he would have to be thrifty to obtain this; he would not be sure that anybody would lend it to him; whereas if he had the County Council (or whoever it may be) to go to he would say "I can get it at once, I shall not trouble to find it."

7559. I do not think you apprehend what I say; you would not be thrifty for a mere speculation, but you might be thrifty to obtain something which you knew you would get?—What he would know he would get is the land. He would say, This piece of land I must have; it will cost me 400 *l.*; now I do not know whether I can borrow any of that or not at the present time, therefore I must get my 400 *l.* You pass your law, and he will say, "Oh, I now only want to get 100 *l.*, because I can get 300 *l.* from the County Council."

7560. It

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

7560. It is a possible thing for a labouring man to accumulate 100 *l*, but it is hardly a possible thing for him to accumulate 400 *l.*; do not you think that the knowledge that if he could accumulate 100 *l.* he could get 300 *l.* at a reasonable rate of interest, would be to him a greater inducement to thrift than the uncertainty which exists at the present time of his being able to borrow the 300 *l.* at all?—There is something in your argument; certainly there is something in it; at the same time, as I say, he has to strive for a less sum, and so far he need not be so thrifty or so hard working as he would be if he had to get the larger amount.

7561. As a lawyer, I should like to know what your opinion is of the effect of primogeniture upon the land in small holdings?—Primogeniture?

7562. Yes, the law of primogeniture?—You mean in cases of intestacy?

7563. Yes?—As to its all going to the eldest son?

7564. Yes?—I think in cases of intestacy that is wrong. I should like to see that altered.

7565. I ask you the effect of the law upon the question of small holdings?—The effect of the law, I think, as it is now would be rather against small holdings than otherwise, but really it so seldom happens; intestacy is very rare.

7566. The fashion of primogeniture which has been set up by the existence of the law has, in your opinion, rather tended to the aggregation of land in the hands of the few?—I think so.

7567. Then, I presume, you would be of the same opinion with regard to settlements?—Yes, family settlements; but not marriage settlements. I draw a great distinction between a family settlement and a marriage settlement.

7568. You said that you have specially inquired (in fact we know that you did) into the small holdings in the Isle of Axholme?—Yes.

7569. In Cumberland and elsewhere?—No, not Cumberland; I did not go so far.

7570. However, you have had some experience of small holdings generally?—Yes.

7571. Can you give us any statistics of puuperism in the districts in which small holdings exist?—No, I have none at hand now.

7572. Did you take note of the social condition of the class of small holders; I mean to say are they people who indulge in improvident marriages and so on, and exhibit want of thrift?—Not especially.

7573. Your attention was not called to it?—No.

7574. Are you aware that there are some very interesting statistics in existence, showing that in countries where there are small holders improvident marriages are very rare?—I am aware, of course, of the statistics as regards France.

7575. Are you aware of the effect of the change of the law in Prussia?—I have read about it; I do not know anything personally about it.

7576. Will you state what the effect was?—No, I should be very sorry to do so. It would only be second-hand information.

7577. Have you any knowledge of the homestead law which prevails in many States in America?—None whatever, directly.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

7578. You told us just now (which is rather inconsistent with your answers to me) that the yeomen class have decreased in the country?—I rather think they have.

7579. Do you think it is desirable that they should increase?—No, I think not. I think a man is in a better position as a tenant farmer than as a yeoman, considerably. In point of fact, I think, one of the causes why a good many men have come to misfortune in the last 10 years, during the period of agricultural depression, is the fact of their having been yeomen. We come round again to mortgages.

7580. Did not the yeomen begin to decrease further off than 10 years ago?—Yes, certainly; they began to decrease, because, as I told the honourable Chairman, of the good prices they could get for their lands in good times.

7581. When do you say that the decrease of yeomen farmers set in?—I could not specify a time, but I should say, roughly speaking, the decrease has been going on for the last 25 years.

7582. Have you not heard that the great decrease began after the French War?—So long ago as that?

7583. Yes?—It may be so. Cobbett says so, if I remember rightly.

7584. Nothwithstanding then your general opinion in favour of small holdings, you are not in favour of yeomen?—Not in favour of yeomen as compared with the tenant farmer. I think the man who is a tenant farmer is in a better position than the yeoman farmer.

7585. Do you think then that the tenant farmer has as much inducement before him to save and to be a thrifty man as the yeoman would have owning his own land?—Yes, I think so. I do not quite see where the contrast would come in.

7586. Will you take the case of a tenant farmer paying a fair rent and farming say 300 acres of land; do you consider that that man is in a better position socially than the yeoman farmer owning 100 acres of land and farming his own?—Yes.

7587. You do?—Yes.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

7588. I have very few questions to ask, but I wish to ask you with regard to the statement you read from the Report of the Inclosure Commissioners, whether the statement you read at that time gives any idea of the acreage allotted to each class?—The gross acreage allotted.

7589. No; the acreage allotted out of the commons to each class?—I can only read the words, "nearly 600,000 acres of common and commonable land have been dealt with."

7590. I mean the proportions of the common that were allotted to each class that you read?—"This has been divided in an average proportion of 44½ acres to each lord of the manor, 24 acres to each common right owner, and 10 acres to each purchaser of the land sold to defray part of the expenses."

7591. You stated that one of the obstacles to the larger distribution of land at the present time was the difficulty of replacing old buildings,

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

which, I presume, at one time existed in England?—I do not think that is quite a fair way to put it. To me it seems rather a strong presumption that the old buildings ever did exist. What I say is this: My difficulty is, taking things as they are now, that there are no buildings. It would require such a large expenditure of money to put up the buildings, houses, and fences, and to make the roads, &c. which would be necessary for the small holdings.

7592. Well, I will take it in the way you have put it. It is not necessary for me to assume for the present purpose that there were buildings; but that is a difficulty in the meantime towards the redistribution of the land?—It appears to me so.

7593. That is if the landlord were undertaking to do it himself?—Yes, certainly.

7594. Do you not think it would be a good thing if that obstacle could be overcome in the way the Chairman suggested; that is, that legislation should step in and assist the small holder in that way by removing that obstacle; that is, by getting the local authority to advance the money?—Do you mean by the State providing money to build those buildings?

7595. Quite so?—No, there I should disagree with you, because I think that the large farm is now more beneficial to the State than the small subdivided ones would be.

7596. What alternative would you propose then; how would the difficulty be got over. You admit the landlord could not do it, and you object to the State doing it?—I have not admitted that the landlord cannot do it; I say there is a difficulty in it because of the money; but I should go so far as to say that in any individual case where it was seen to be advantageous the difficulty is got over under the present laws. The laws enabling landlords to borrow money for buildings and for improvements are sufficient in themselves to enable landlords to effect that.

7597. Then the obstacle does not exist?—No; it may exist or it may not; but I say that our law is sufficient where the obstacle does exist (assuming it to exist) to remove it; nay more, I say that in the case of a settled estate it is possible (and the law allows) for the tenant for life to sell a part, and with the proceeds of that sale to erect buildings and houses on the unsold part; and that therefore in any case where it is seen to be advantageous and economical for the land to be so split up it can be done at the present time without any further legislation.

7598. That goes to show then that all legislation is unnecessary in this direction?—That is my humble opinion.

7599. You also made the statement on which you have been cross-examined since, that it would be impolitic to grant money to purchasers as suggested in the proposals made to us, inasmuch as it would destroy habits of thrift in them?—Yes.

7600. What I wish to ask you in regard to the statement you have made that the average wages in that part of England was 11 *s.*, is this: Do not you think that it would take a great deal of thrift on the part of an agricultural labourer to become the holder of a piece of land, or an owner?—Undoubtedly. An agricultural labourer has to be a very careful man. The agricultural labourer does not get exceedingly high wages, but I must remind you that that 11 *s.* which I told you of is simply the actual money that he is paid; he has other remuneration.

7601. I was going to ask you what this other remuneration was?—In many places he has a cottage either at very little rent or no rent. In other places he has a certain amount of milk. In other places he has a certain amount of coal given him; in others wood; in others a potatoe ground.

7602. Has he not generally to pay for those privileges?—No; in most cases I think he has not.

7603. But in some cases he has, has he not?—He may have.

7604. Is it not far more likely that feelings of despair would be induced on the part of the agricultural labourer rather than thrift by the difficulties which exist at present in the way of his becoming the owner of the land?—Certainly not in the case of a good man; I could show you a lot of them who have become owners of their comfortable little freeholds; or occupiers.

7605. I want to ask you one question with regard to the statistics you quoted as to the number of sheep that were upheld on small holdings. In that calculation you gave the Committee did you include Scotland?—No, I know nothing of Scotland. My figures are limited to England.

7606. England only?—Yes.

7607. I wished to ask that question simply because as you know the proportion of sheep on the holdings are very much larger there, and would affect the statistics?—I am much obliged to you.

7608. You also remarked, which I did not know before, that fruit was largely grown upon large holdings?—Yes, now-a-days.

7609. Do you know any such holding?—Yes, Lord Sudeley's estate in Worcestershire.

7610. But it is only recently that this has been done?—It is only recently, within the last 10 or 15 years.

7611. You quoted Arthur Young I think?—I did.

7612. As to the improvements that large holdings encourage in the breed of cattle and stock generally, I think?—Yes.

7613. You are of course aware that Arthur Young is a very strenuous advocate of small holdings?—Of small holdings?

7614. Yes?—Was he?

7615. I think so?—Hardly I think, but it depends upon what you mean by a "strenuous advocate." He says they are very poor; these are his words I am quoting:—these are the small holders which he especially treats of in the Isle of Axholme: "They are very poor respecting money, but very happy respecting their mode of existence. Contrivance, mutual assistance, by barter and hire, enable them to manage these little farms, though they break all the rules of rural proportion. A man will keep a pair of horses that has but three or four acres by means of vast commons and working for hire," and so on.

7616. You

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

7616. You are aware how he has praised the system of holding on the Continent and in the Channel Islands and held them up as an example in his writings?—I do not remember Arthur Young writing on the Channel Islands. I may be wrong; I do not remember it at this moment.

7617. You say you prefer to leave this good result to economic laws, the redistribution of the land?—Yes, I do, certainly.

7618. Are you of opinion that the present land laws are "natural laws"?—I think they get more natural every day.

7619. Quite so; and are likely to get more natural by-and-bye?—I do not know I am sure.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7620. You said that you knew well Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, where there are a good many small holdings. I want to ask, do *bonâ fide* cultivating owners very largely prevail in those counties, or is it only in certain very limited tracts which they exist?—In Lincolnshire the cultivating owners are mainly found in the Isle of Axholme, which you may know is a part of the county on the borders of Nottingham and Yorkshire, and also in the eastern central, southern, and eastern parts of the county that is near Boston, notably at Kirton, and other villages in that locality. Those are the principal places. "Occupying owners" is an expression you used, I think.

7621 "Cultivating owners"?—It is a very great difficulty, as I have pointed out here, to get the numbers of cultivating owners. All the statistics run, as I think you pointed out in my evidence in chief, in such a way that they include villas and so on. I went to very great trouble as regards certain parishes both in the Isle of Axholme and in other parts of Lincolnshire on the eastern side, to get out, so far as I possibly could, the details, and I have about half a dozen cases; but to do it you require local knowledge.

7622. You see what I want is not the exact details, but I want to ask you as knowing and as having inquired particularly in those counties, whether the parts of those counties where real small farms are cultivated by their owners, are very large, or compartively small tracts, and whether only a few parishes or a very large number of parishes?—Compared with the whole area of the county they are few. Their acreage is small compared with the whole area of the county.

7623. So that it would be impossible to point to Lincolnshire as a county of small owners?—Lincolnshire more than any other county in England shows the very greatest diversity, because you have large farms there and you have very small ones; but as I say it all depends upon the locality.

7624. What I want to get at is this: is the proportion of the county of Lincolnshire held by small cultivators a very large proportion?—No, not in acreage.

7625. A small proportion?—A small proportion in acreage.

7626. Then you have found it totally impossible to distinguish between villas and real farms?—Not totally impossible, but accompanied with a very great deal of difficulty, and necessitating in every case local knowledge.

7627. Then we have not the means of distinguishing them so far?—No; to distinguish them you must have the rate-books of each individual parish, and you must have the assistance of some person who is able to tell you whether the person named there is in point of fact a cultivating owner or not, each individual one.

7628. I think you told us that undoubtedly the class of yeoman, men of 50 to 100 acres and upwards, had diminished, but that the class of owners of under 50 acres had increased. I want to ask you, as a matter of opinion, whether you think that the cultivating proprietors of under 50 acres, as distinguished from allotment holders on the one side and villa holders on the other, have really increased; the real cultivating holders?—I should think they would be much about the same so far as I can judge.

7629. Would you consider any man holding under 50 acres, as a rule, not being a fruit grower or a special grower, a small farmer; or would you consider him merely a man who combines that holding with some other occupation?—I should say in nine cases out of ten he would combine it with other occupation.

7630. You have said that many of the small owners were tempted by the higher prices of that time to sell their farms, and go into trade?—Certainly.

7631. Has there been any tendency to sell in order to become large farmers?—No.

7632. Why not?—Because generally speaking the men who owned land, knew too much about farming to do that.

7633. Do you mean that the farmer knew that farming was such a bad thing?—Yes, if he was an owner of 200 acres, and sold his 200 acres, you may be pretty sure he would not put the proceeds of the sale into farming.

7634. That is only the last few years, is it. Everybody up to a few years ago used to think farming a splendid occupation?—No, not "everybody," only those who did not know anything about it. The farmers did not think it a splendid occupation, outsiders did.

7635. Still there was great competition for farms?—Undoubtedly, because, as I say, the outsiders thought it was a splendid occupation, and we were in a flourishing state all through. Tradesmen and shopkeepers were more flourishing, and they rushed to get land; if they could not buy it they occupied it at good rents.

7636. I think you told us that in your opinion a very large number of labouring men have saved and bought freeholds and become small freeholders, and that you could find such men in almost every parish?—Small owners or small occupiers.

7637. In what sense do you mean; do you mean small farmers, or merely people who have a small house and a bit of ground attached to it?—Small farmers, many of them.

7638. Do you think there has been a very large creation of farmers of that kind?—No. I say you will find men of that stamp in almost every parish.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

7639. Men who have become small proprietors, by their own thrift and industry?—Yes.

7640. Do you mean to say that they have saved enough to buy 50 or 100 acres?—No, perhaps they rent the land.

7641. First as regards ownership, do you think there is any large number of them who have become cultivating farmers of that kind?—Yes; I think there are a great number. I think if you were to go into the figures, you would find a considerable number of them.

7642. What class would they be?—They would be the best class of agricultural labourers. The men who have been foremen, shepherds, stockmen, and so on, and probably have most industrious wives, probably women who have been servants, and have been able to save up money out of their wages; towards middle-life they marry, and they have a nice little holding of their own.

7643. Do you think there is really a large class of people of that kind who have saved enough to buy a real farm of 50 to 100 acres?—Or to occupy it.

7644. I want to confine you to buying it?—I do not know. I would not say about buying it.

7645. Then I come to the question of occupying it. Do you think there are a number of people who take farms which were not small farms before?—No, I do not say that; I say the man was not a small farmer; I do not say the land was not a small farm.

7646. Do you think there has been any creation of small farms of that kind during the last few years?—I do not know. You see the figures I produced show you that they are tolerably stationary.

7647. I think I understood you to say that the average size of farms had decreased, that as a matter of fact in the country generally the size of farms was decreasing; which I think is another form of expressing the view that small farms have increased?—I think I said that the average size of the farm, English farm, in 1875, was 58½ acres. Now according to the 1885 Return it is 60 acres.

7648. There has been no diminution in size?—No, it is an increase rather than a decrease.

7649. What do you think is the smallest size of farms that can be cultivated profitably and advantageously?—For the man who earned nothing else, do you mean?

7650. Yes?—It is rather difficult to say, because it depends so much upon the soil, the locality and position, nearness to market, and lots of other things. It is most difficult to tie oneself down to say what the size is.

7651. Do you think there are many parts of the country in which a man might manage to live upon a 20-acre farm where there is no special cultivation, such as fruit or vegetables or carrots?—Well, he may live, perhaps, on 20 acres.

7652. Do you think the class of small holdings of from five acres to 20 and 30 acres where a man combines it with other work is beneficial?—Certainly; it is the best thing out. It is a capital thing for the man.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

7653. Do you think it is very much to be encouraged that people living in villages should have plots of land outside?—Undoubtedly.

7654. And do you think the tendency has been to increase small holdings of that kind?—There we go back to the figures again. I cannot say more than I have said before.

7655. As a matter of personal opinion do you think it is so?—As a matter of personal opinion, I think that the man in the country who has wished, and who still wishes for it, can obtain it.

7656. Then I think we may take it as far as regards farms, that you are in favour of large farms rather than small farms, but you are very much in favour of this kind of small holding which a man may combine with some other kind of occupation?—Yes, I am much obliged to you for putting my opinion so tersely.

7657. I think you spoke of the landlords who had estates brought into the market being sold in small lots. You instanced the case of the Duke of Marlborough where, out of 29 lots, 22 were under 10 acres; were those existing holdings under 10 acres, or were they small lots artificially carved out for sale?—They appear to have been carved out for sale. There were no small lots before.

7658. Do you know whether they were near the village?—Yes, many of them were near Witney, the market town.

7659. In that case would they propably be held by people in the town?—That I cannot tell you, I am sorry to say. Here is a man I know to be a lawyer who has one; here is another man, I know by name, who happens to be a coal merchant.

7660. Were these advertised as building lots, or as agricultural lots?—They were not put up as building lots.

7661. I mean this lawyer, and this coal merchant are not going to build a villa upon the land?—Oh, no. It was simply two fields that he had.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

7662. Do not the particulars of sale say building land?—"Farms, buildings, cottages, lands and woodland," "highly valuable property."

7663. What are the other particulars of sale on the table?—These are buildings. One of the men who purchased one or two of these small lots cut them up and made them into building lots.

7664. The same sale?—A subsequent sale; a part of the same land; one or two lots.

Sir *George Campbell.*

7665. Have you any knowledge in any parts of the country of any instances in which owners of estates have tried to sell them in small lots, not as mere building and villa lots, or as small lots near towns, but as real small farms?—Yes, I think I have had one or two cases of that kind before me, but I cannot call them to my mind at this moment.

7666. Is it your impression that they have been successful when they have tried that sort of thing?—Oh yes. I will give you one instance; in Lincolnshire; that was some little time

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

time ago, a part of the Libthorpe Estates were all cut up.

7667. Was that successful?—Yes, most successful.

7668. What class of people bought the lots, do you know?—I do not know exactly what class they were. I do not know who they were, but the lots were all sold and sold well.

7669. Have you any idea whether they were bought by existing tenants or by people who meant to be cultivators of the land?—That I cannot tell you, I do not know.

7670. You do not remember?—No, I did not go into it sufficiently, and therefore I cannot tell you.

7671. I think you said that fruit and butter, and things of that kind, could be better cultivated by large farmers than by small farmers?—I say more economically, and probably better.

7672. Especially having regard to markets and so on. Do not you think that that advantage they have in regard to markets and carriage by railway and everything else is to a considerable extent artificial, and to a considerable extent due to the way in which all the arrangements in this country have been made to suit the large men, rather than to suit the small men?—I do not think that that is so. What I mainly had in my mind were the men who made cheese in Derbyshire, the small men there. The idea of the late Lord Vernon and others in starting those factories, was to do away with the difficulty that those men had in selling their cheese except to the cheese factor, who often got them under his thumb with regard to money. That I think was the case with many a small owner.

7673. But independent of the advantage of establishing central butter factories for small men and so on, do not you think that in this country there are not the same facilities for sending small parcels by rail, and selling small parcels in the market that existed in this country with regard to markets before railways, and as exists at the present moment in France and other countries, where things are made to suit the small people?—Well, we have our parcel post you know now.

7674. A farmer could hardly carry on his business by parcel post could be?—A small man could send his butter; I get cucumbers by parcel post. I do not see why a farmer who grows them should not send them to his customers.

7675. Then as regards the difficulties small farmers have as regards machines, are you aware that in very many parts of the country the large farmers having machines of their own, have taken to threshing by travelling machines in preference to their own machines?—Yes, some of them have in preference to their own threshing machines, certainly.

7676. So that the tendency is rather to manage a good many things in that way?—That has been one tendency caused by the bad times of course.

7677. Caused by the bad times, do you say?—I think so. The farmers have not been able to put their hands into their pockets to pay for these large implements. There are fewer men able and willing to buy a steam plough now than there were 20 years ago.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

7678. Still are not there many farms where threshing machines are in existence, and where they have been abandoned in favour of the use of travelling machines?—I have heard of a farmer preferring a portable engine to a fixed one, if that is what you mean, but I do not know a case of a man who had his portable engine, and who has sold it and trusted to a travelling one. I never heard of such a case; I have heard of the other case, of course, because the fixed engine on farm premises has been found by experience not to be so good and useful as a portable engine.

7679. You mean a fixed steam engine?—Yes.

7680. I rather mean a farm of 200 or 300 acres where they cannot afford to put up a great steam engine; are not there more facilities for threshing by the travelling machines?—Yes.

7681. Very great facilities?—Oh, yes.

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7682. In answer to a question you said you were not aware that Arthur Young was in favour of small holdings?—Not specially so.

7683. As you have quoted him, are you aware that he was very much in favour of small ownerships?—I do not remember at this moment.

7684. Do you remember his enlarging on small ownerships, and speaking (to use his words) of the "magic of ownership, which can alone turn a desert into a garden." Do you remember such words as those?—I do not know that those words are his. I have heard the words; I know he says that small freeholders "are passionately fond of buying a bit of land." I do not remember those words, but I have no doubt you are correct.

7685. If that is so, you would think that he was in favour very much of small ownerships, would not you, or of the ownership of land as against tenancies?—I do not think it follows.

7686. Then you take it from those words that he had a great idea of cultivating ownership?—Oh, "the magic of ownership," no doubt.

7687. And the possibility of that tenure to turn a "desert into a garden" to use his words?—Yes.

7688. I think you quoted Arthur Young with regard to the small holdings in Lincolnshire, where he speaks of farmers holding four or five to 20 acres, cultivating their land with all that care and anxiety, by the hands of the family, which are found abroad in the country mentioned?—Yes, that is right. That is the very sentence I have quoted, "cultivated with all that minutiæ of care and anxiety, by the hands of the family which are found abroad in the country mentioned;" that is the phrase.

7689. In speaking of the superior productions of large farms, I notice in your report, speaking of Derbyshire, that you give the area of land held in farms of 10 acres, and under 50 acres, as 51,212 acres?—Those are the owners of land, and you must remember that those figures are not mine.

7690. They are compiled from the Returns of 1876?

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

1876?—No; they are not "compiled;" they are actually quoted they are the actual figures that are in the summary that was ordered by the House to be printed in 1876. They are not my figures at all; they are the actual figures from the House of Commons Return.

7691. Those figures give the area of land held in farms of 10 acres, and under 50, at 51,212 acres, and if you take the area of farms from 500 to 1,000 acres, it is about the same?—Yes, it is, curiously.

7692. I want to point out to you (and then to ask you a question), that the area of land, 51,212 acres, cut up in small farms of 10 to 50 acres, realises a gross rental of 151,051 *l.*; while the same amount of land cut up into farms of 500 to 1,000 acres only realises just under 78,003 *l.*?—£. 79,630.

7693. Just so; might I ask how you account for that great difference?—You must remember that those are not farms; those are ownerships.

7694. I am speaking of ownerships?—Very good; then you must take it that the smaller figures of 10 to 50 acres, includes all the suburban ownerships of that description, which would naturally be of very much greater value than the 500 to 1,000 acres, which must be farms pure and simple.

7695. In order to avoid including shops and such like, all below 10 acres are excluded; I presume there are very few shops that have 10 acres attached to them, and I have taken farms of from 10 acres and under 50 acres, being the same amount of land as farms of 50 to 1,000 acres, and more than double the rental?—Yes, I say that probably the reason is that the smaller occupations are suburban.

Chairman.

7696. Does it not also show that the small holdings are on the good land, and the large ones are on the poorer land?—It may very likely; in Derbyshire that would probably be so, because you must remember that a great deal of Derbyshire is poorish land up in the hills, while the vales are beautiful land.

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7697. But you have no statistics for that?—No, I have no statistics for that; but again you must remember that is only gross estimated rental.

7698. In both cases?—In both cases; so that it does not actually give you what the actual value of the two is. The difference may be a great deal more.

7699. But it is gross estimated rental in all cases?—At that particular time.

7700. You name also three owners who own a third of the total area of the county, although the gross estimated rental is only one-thirteenth of the whole estimated rental of the county?—Yes, that is quite right.

7701. Would you draw the conclusion from that, that the small owners make more out of their land than the large owners?—Oh, no, not at all; because you must remember that those three estates there are mountain land, the owners being the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Devonshire, and, I forget the third at this moment; but a great deal of it is grouse moor and rocks.

7702. The same difference you get with regard to Essex. I suppose the explanation is the same with regard to that?—No; the explanation would be different as to that, because we do not produce grouse in Essex; but if you go to that county I dare say I could explain the difference.

7703. I need not detain the Committee; the gist of this Table is that the same area of land of the small owners brings in a larger rental than that of the large owners?—Yes, undoubtedly it is so; and it is explained by what I say. In Essex, especially, its suburban character, and its nearness to London, would bring that out, if no other reason.

7704. Do you think the small farmers pay a higher rent, as a rule, than the larger farmers?—Yes, I do.

7705. What is the cause of that?—In nine cases out of ten it is because the land is a great deal better.

7706. Taking the same quality of land, do you think it is on account of being smaller farms?—Not because it is a smaller farm. The small farmer could not exist on much of the land that is comprised in the large farm.

7707. Is a small cultivator likely to improve indifferent land if he has the chance?—Oh, yes; and so will the large one.

7708. You have spoken of the difficulties of small holders. You give, in your report, numerous cases in which large farmers have lost a great deal of money in farming?—Yes.

7709. For instance, in Bedford, a farmer with 356 acres lost 1,500 *l.* in four years, and a farmer with 640 acres lost 1,000 *l.* in two years. I presume you would not take it that small holders do worse, by comparison, than that?—No, I do not think that they would.

7710. When you speak of the small holders not doing very well, it is a general statement with regard to all farms?—It undoubtedly was at that time.

7711. It was at that time?—Yes, certainly.

7712. You said that you were in favour of small holdings, but that you would not interfere in any way to create them; you would leave them to economic law?—I do say that.

7713. Do you consider the law of settlement which you have referred to an economic law?—I say that now the law of settlement does not affect us at all.

7714. In what way?—Because all settled land can be sold.

7715. If three-fourths of a commodity of any kind, whether it is land or anything else, is held in such a condition that its nominal owner cannot sell it and use the money as he likes, does it not seem to you that such a commodity will not come freely into the market under such conditions?—Not at all, if the money he gets can be more usefully employed in another way.

7716. Take any commodity, suppose it to be land or merchandise, and the owner is not allowed to sell it and use the money as he likes, but that there

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

there are restrictions that he should reinvest it in a certain limited way, and not use the money as he likes; do not you think that that would prevent that commodity coming freely into the market?—Not if the purposes on which he could spend the proceeds of sale were more beneficial to him than the land itself.

7717. I am speaking of the economic law which you wish land to be subject to; is such restriction of any commodity in accordance with economic law?—I do not see that it is against it. I do not see that you offend any economic law in a man settling 5,000 *l.* Consols on his wife and children, nor do I see that you offend any economic law if he settles 5,000 *l.* worth of land on his wife and children.

7718. That is not my question; a man at present, if he sells 1,000 *l.* worth of land, because he wants 1,000 *l.*, cannot use that 1,000 *l.* for any purposes he chooses?—No.

7719. In other words the ordinary reason for disposing of property does not apply; do you consider that a sound economic law?—Under our present civilization and circumstances I do. I think settlement is truly economical. I think it would be a most cruel and uneconomical thing to do away with the power of settlement.

7720. Do you think it would be a sound economic law to apply to any property?—I do; I do not see any difference between 5,000 *l.* Consols or land or railway shares, if you like to settle it; and it is a good thing to settle it.

7721. You have stated that the labourers have 16*s.* a week, and other allowances besides; are you aware that in a largely increasing number of places the labourers are now employed by the day, paid so much per day, and discharged when not required?—No; that is quite new to me. As regards agricultural labourers it is quite new to me.

7722. In the evidence you collected for the Royal Commission of 1882, may I ask if you collected any from agricultural labourers?—Oh, yes, I have given some; I sent in to the Commission answers to the questions which my colleagues and myself drew up in three different schedules: A. to go to landowners, B. to go to farmers, and C. to go to labourers. We sent them out. They are not published in detail, but I can send you one if you like to see it.

7723. You had no labourers before you?—Oh, I beg your pardon.

7724. I am only asking you the question?—Oh, yes, I saw many labourers; I went into the cottages of these small owners, and talked and chatted with the labourers to a considerable extent.

7725. You were speaking about inclosures, and stating that the small cultivators had not been diminished by the system of inclosure?—No, I do not think so.

7726. You referred to the Report of the Inclosure Act of 1876?—Yes.

7727. That, I believe, referred to a comparatively small amount of land, 600,000 acres?—It is all that they had inclosed in the 30 years.

7728. Since 1845?—Yes.

7729. Are you aware of what had been inclosed previous to 1845, since 1760?—Yes; I have read the figures in the Report of the Commission on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture of 1867, but I have not brought it down here.

7730. Are you aware that there were nearly 4,000 inclosures, and that the amount of land inclosed was several millions of acres?—I really cannot carry the figures in my head; I have not brought that Report down, but I can put my hand on it. I have it in my chambers; I have looked through the figures.

7731. Is your opinion with regard to these inclosures the same, that the inhabitants have never been hurt by them?—Yes, it is.

7732. Are you aware that there has been in the history of this inclosure question always an alleged grievance, at any rate, on the part of the people that their rights have been reduced by these inclosures?—Yes, I have read that. It comes out very fully in the Report of the Commission I referred to of 1867.

7733. Do you agree with it that their rights have been very grievously interfered with by inclosures?—No, I do not. I think as a general rule those grievances were rather supposed grievances, and if my recollection serves me right many speeches are speeches which were made before the actual inclosures were made. They were apprehended grievances rather than those that had actually taken place.

7734. That is the conclusion you draw?—In many cases.

7735. Do you happen to remember that the grievance was so great in the time of Edw. 6?—I did not know you were going back to Edw. 6; I thought you meant the last hundred years' inclosures.

7736. I am speaking of the whole question of inclosures from the time when inclosures began, as affecting even to the destruction of the rural peasantry of this country, affecting cultivating owners of the soil. Then I was going to ask you if you are aware that a Commission was appointed in the time of Edw. 6, which is not so very long ago, called an Extraordinary Commission, for the redress of inclosures, and that they reported as to the cruel results that they had been to the people; and the President of that Commission stated that thousands were begging their bread from door to door who formerly kept honest houses?—I regret that my historical researches for this Committee have not gone so far back as that.

7737. Are you aware that the same allegations (without troubling to take up the time of the Committee), or similar statements rather, have come down to a comparatively recent date?—So far as I can I have confined my answers to your questions to inclosures that have taken place, roughly speaking, during the last 100 years.

7738. Then we will take such a neighbourhood as Hitchin, for instance; are you aware that Mr. Seebohm states that from 1766 to 1832, 22 parishes within 10 miles of Hitchin were inclosed, and are you aware that every cottager had a definite right on the common before it was inclosed; is it your opinion that none of these cottages have lost their rights in any way?—Not without compensation; my opinion is that if they had

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

had those rights they were compensated for them.

7739. By money compensation?—I do not say how; either by grants of land (as in many cases), or they had particular rights on the common. I know of an instance of rights of estover. A considerable piece of land was upon the inclosure alloted to the churchwardens of the parish to compensate the inhabitants of the parish for that particular right. I have looked into several Inclosure Acts, and I have always found similar things.

7740. At any rate, I suppose you would admit that, taking the district as a sample, the number of small cultivators are decreased, either by compensation or in some other way?—I should very much question whether those were "small cultivators."

7741. They were men with rights over the commons of those 22 parishes?—Yes; but I very much question whether they were cultivators. How could they cultivate it if they had rights of common?

7742. Supposing they were?—"Supposing they were;" yes.

7743. Supposing they were men with those rights, those rights do not exist now?—Not in the same way.

7744. The cottagers within that ten-mile area do not exist with rights of common and other agricultural privileges?—I do not know; I should be sorry to say "no," unless I went into the Acts themselves, very sorry.

7745. Then coming to your statement with reference to the 600,000 acres inclosed, according to the Commissioners' Report of 1876, you referred to a portion of land set apart as field gardens, and for exercise and recreation. Do you happen to know how much out of that 600,000 acres of land was set aside?—No, I do not know. I can give you the amount of the value. "The value of the land taken from the best of this for public purposes (comprising land for recreation, field gardens, &c.) has been estimated at 282,140 *l.*"

7746. Are you not making an error there; do not you include all the lands for schools and churches and burial grounds?—I said "et cetera."

7747. And public roads?—Yes; I will take the whole words; I do not wish to be unfair; I only did it for the purpose of saving the time of the Committee. I will read it at length ("comprising land for recreation, field gardens, public quarries, fuel, schools and churches, burial-grounds, and other purposes, and public roads").

7748. Then I may take it that for field gardens there were 2,195 acres; I am quoting the Report now?—For field gardens, is that so?

7749. For field gardens there were 2,195 acres?—I do not find those figures here.

7750. Have you the Report of 1876?—Yes, in my hand.

7751. Have you "exercise and recreation ground," 1,758 acres?—No: this is the Report. It does not give those figures.

7752. I have an extract from it?—With great submission to you, I do not think they are in the Report at all.

7753. Then there is another report of what

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

were Inclosure Commissioners, who are now the Land Commissioners, which states that, because this is an extract from it?—I only bring forward in my evidence that particular one. Of course there is a report every year, as we know. They have to report every year to the House.

7754. This which you have handed to me is the 1877 Report; I am referring to the 1876 Report?—That is the Report made for 1876, published in 1877.

7755. At any rate, I think you will find that there was 2,195 acres set aside as field gardens. If that amount be correct, you will admit that it is very small. Without pledging you to its correctness, if it be correct, you will admit that it is a very small quantity of land to set aside out of such a large quantity as 600,000 acres?—What was the quantity?

7756. Two thousand one hundred and ninety-five acres?—Yes; that is a very small proportion for field gardens, you say.

7757. Yes, for field gardens——

Chairman.

7758. What is "a field garden"?—A field garden is what we call an allotment now. I do not know that it is very small.

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7759. Not out of 600,000 acres?—Well, there it is.

7760. I want to bring this out a little. Coming to separate Provisional Orders for inclosures, are you acquainted with them; you can hardly be acquainted with them individually?—Not all of them.

7761. May I quote to you the inclosure of Riccall in York, with an acreage of 1,297 acres, where the allotment for recreation was six acres, and the allotment for field gardens 20 acres?—It is very curious that you should instance that, most singular; because I went with my colleague on the Royal Commission, Mr. John Coleman, who was Lord Wenlock's agent at the time, and saw this common. I actually saw it during the time of its inclosure; and all I can say is, that I think the six acres, and the 20 acres, considering the district, and considering the class of land that it was (much of it was bog, awful stuff), was sufficient, and a very fair proportion.

7762. You think that 26 acres out of 1,297 was a fair proportion for the labouring poor?—In the case of Riccall.

7763. Take Steventon, in Berkshire?—I know a little about Steventon, curiously enough.

7764. An inclosure of 1,373 acres, and the allotment set aside for recreation was 14 acres, and the allotments for field gardens 20 acres; do you consider that sufficient?—I should consider that was very fair; I will tell you why. The land there is not bog, as at Riccall, but down land. Some of it is furze. There is a capital fox cover there. It is down land. It is not suitable at all, the greater part of it, and it is a very sparsely populated place.

7765. What was the land suitable for?—For growing oats, and so on.

7766. Would

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

7766. Would it not be suitable for the small cultivator as well as the large?—No, I think not; just up there, just on the borders of the Berkshire Downs, would be very awkward.

7767. You think 24 acres set aside for the labouring class, out of 1,373 acres, is sufficient?—At Steventon.

7768. Take Cambridge; Heldersham?—I do not know that.

7769. Out of 1,178 acres there were eight acres set aside for recreation, and 13 for field gardens; do you consider that sufficient for the labouring class?—Usually the question in these cases is, what is the population, not what is the acreage. Eight acres for recreation out of a total of 1,175; 1,175 acres is not much bigger than a good-sized farm. Eight acres is ample. Think what eight acres of recreation ground is.

7770. I am speaking more particularly of the 15 acres of field gardens, which is all the labouring population of that district (whatever the size of it might be) got out of 1,175 acres. The question I want to ask you is, do you think that sufficient?—I do not know. I would not say unless I knew the population. I do not know the place.

7771. You have quoted, I think, the Board of Agriculture; you have quoted Arthur Young, at any rate?—Yes.

7772. I want just to quote the Report, and then to ask your opinion; this is a Report of the Board of Agriculture on the effect of the inclosures upon the rural population; take the parish of Tutvy, in Bedfordshire: "To my knowledge, before the inclosure the poor inhabitants found no difficulty in procuring milk for their children; since, it is with the utmost difficulty that they can procure any milk at all; cows lessened from 110 to 40"?—That is an extract from the evidence of the parson, I remember. You must take that *cum grano*, of course.

7773. Do you dispute the evidence?—No, I do not I say you must take it that he is a very kind-hearted man, and he may have made the best for his side, that is all.

7774. Still the cows kept by the peasantry lessened in number, from 110 to 40, if the evidence be correct?—Undoubtedly. If the evidence was so, the evidence was so.

7775. And by that, I suppose, the smaller men would suffer?—Yes; I quite agree that it is a misfortune in our villages that milk cannot be more easily obtained.

7776. I am speaking about the quantity of inclosures?—Yes; well, it comes to that, you see.

7777. As to the inclosures having not affected these small men, we have disposed of the historical question; now we come to something later; take the parish of Letcomb, in Berks?—Yes, I know Letcomb.

7778. It states here, "The poor seem the greatest sufferers; they can no longer keep a cow, which before many of them did; and they are therefore now maintained by the parish:" may we take it that you admit that the inclosure in such a case diminished the privileges and rights of the people?—Assuming it to be the

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

fact that that arose from an inclosure, I quite agree, of course.

7779. Cranage, in Chester; the report is, since the inclosure, "poor men's cows and sheep have no place, or any being"!—It does not at all follow that they could not buy a great deal cheaper and a great deal better, not at all, in consequence of the inclosure.

7780. I am not asking you that question, but I am speaking of the curtailment of the rights of the small holders?—It is a great deal cheaper and better sometimes to buy bread, for instance, than to make it at home, and it is a great deal cheaper to buy your milk than to keep your cow, for people in our class of life, certainly.

7781. May I quote to you, Offley, in Herts, in order to ask the same question, or Norton, in Herts; the "cottagers are deprived of their cows without compensation"?—Well, except upon very strong evidence I should be disposed to disagree with those words, "without compensation." As I have said before, I have looked through a considerable number of awards and Acts, and I have never been able to come across a case where compensation was not afforded.

7782. May I ask you about Radcliffe, in Leicestershire; "a great defalcation in cheese and pigs, occasioned principally by taking away the land from the cottager"?—I should demur to the words "taking away."

7783. But if the evidence is there, I take it that you would admit that these small cultivators were injured?—Not without compensation.

7784. You spoke of the Inclosure Act of 1845?—Yes.

7785. Is it a fact that by that Act only commoners are admitted to the privileges, but that the labourers and descendants of labourers who have had the prescriptive right are excluded by that Act?—I do not remember that that is so.

7786. Will you take it that men with simply prescriptive rights have not rights under that Act of 1845?—No; I cannot take that without knowing what you mean by "prescriptive rights."

7787. Of user; men who have been in the habit of using a common for many years, but cannot prove that they are commoners in point of law?—That may be so. That would only appear to be right, because the Inclosure Act only affects those who have the rights of common, and because a man happened to be an inhabitant of a particular place it does not necessarily follow that he was a commoner; not at all.

7788. Then, without speaking of the rights or the wrong of the matter, that Act, by precluding those who have prescriptive rights; I am not speaking of whether it be right or wrong, but if it be a fact that the Inclosure Act of 1845 excluded those who had prescriptive rights, to that extent these men were deprived of their privileges?—I do not like to suggest that your mode of citing the Act and quoting the Act is inaccurate, but, *primâ facie*, I can hardly imagine an Act of Parliament expressly excluding these persons whom you name, because I should have apprehended that they would be naturally excluded by the general law.

 7789. I think

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

7789. I think you are quite right; I am saying that the Act of Parliament so defines the commoner's rights that those who have simply prescriptive rights as inhabitants who have been using the commons are excluded in this manner?—I am afraid you use the word "prescriptive" in its common and every-day use, and not in its legal sense, do you? With great submission what I understand you mean is, that those who have used a certain right, whether they had the right to use that right or not, are excluded.

7790. Yes?—Well I say they are rightly excluded, but I cannot understand the Act of Parliament particularising them, because the law would exclude them.

7791. I am not asking whether they are rightly or wrongly excluded; I only want to get at this; that by the exclusion the number of those who enjoyed privileges before was lessened. I am not speaking of whether it was right or wrong to do so?—I should answer that question in this way, that the number of those who rightly and legally enjoyed privileges before was not lessened.

7792. Those who were deprived were those who had enjoyed these privileges, whether legally or not?—It may have been that certain persons who presumed they had these rights were deprived of those rights which they so assumed, but to which they had no legal right; that may be so.

7793. May I ask you whether you agree with the Report of the Board of Agriculture (Sir John Sinclair), which refers to a state of things in former times, when there were numbers of small farms with rights of common by which each family could support itself in comfort; do you agree with that report?—That is only a bare statement. Does it mean that they exist or that they are better than at the present time, or what?

7794. That they exist?—Well it is very difficult to agree with a report without seeing the context really. If you take simply a single passage out of a long report and ask me whether I agree with it or not, it is not at all satisfactory.

7795. You are aware there are a great number of publications, and many debates in Parliament, particularly complaining of the deprivation of the poorer classes by these inclosures?—Yes; but as I have said I think most of the speeches in Parliament that were made, were made before the Inclosure, not after it. They were apprehended troubles and not actual ones.

7796. Do you think that the speech of the Earl of Lincoln belongs to that category when, n 1845, he states, "This I know, that in nine cases out of 20 Committees in this House sitting on Private Inclosure Bills neglected the rights of the poor"?—I really cannot answer for the Earl of Lincoln or for gentlemen who sat on Committees of the House of Commons in those days.

7797. Do you think the gentlemen who sat on those Committees in 1845 are more likely, or somewhat likely to know, the state of things at that time?—Than I am now, do you mean?

7798. Than any of us now?—I do not know.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

7799. You spoke of your objection to the State or local authority advancing money to men to purchase land. On what ground is that objection founded: is it from fear of loss?—No; I think it is wrong in principle.

7800. Do you think it wrong in principle to advance money to landlords?—To buy land, yes.

7801. Or for any purpose?—No, not for a public good; for improving it.

7802. There is no wrongness of principle in advancing money to landlords to buy land or to improve land?—Oh, yes, there is a wrongness "to buy land." I do not care whether he is a small man or a large man; it is equally wrong.

7803. To improve land, I will say; for any purpose connected with the land?—That is a great deal too wide. I do not say that there is anything wrong in principle in the State advancing money to a big man, or to a little man, or to any man for the sake of improving the land.

7804. Then you are opposed to the recent legislation which advances money to tenants to purchase their holdings?—I know of no such legislation in England.

7805. I do not refer to England exactly?—I know of none such in England.

7806. Are you opposed to the principle of Lord Ashbourne's Act?—I know nothing about Ireland; I have merely visited it.

7807. You stated that it was necessary to take away the power of mortgage from the small owners?—No, I did not quite say that, did I? I say, if you really want to make him a successful man, that is what you must do, whether it is right or wrong.

7808. In the case where a small cultivator was able to purchase his holding, by an advance to him say, of a fifth or a fourth of the purchase-money, leaving the remainder as a perpetual quit-rent, would not that to a large degree (I do not say wholly, but to a large degree) save him from any temptation to mortgage?—You are taking the cultivator?

7809. The owner; the man who has purchased on one-fourth his own money, and three-fourths lent him by the State, for which he pays a perpetual quit-rent; would he not under such arrangements be protected from the temptation to mortgage?—Of course, he could not mortgage what he had already mortgaged; it is mortgaged to the State; you only change your mortgagee.

7810. Do you see any difference in an advance by the State, which can never be foreclosed, never called in, and the interest never raised, and a private mortgage, where both of those contingencies might arise?—I see a great deal of difference, and I see this, that the State can never give up that interest; the State must always exact it, and the State would be the most exacting mortgagee, and would be a deal worse for a man than a private mortgagee.

7811. But, I suppose, a private mortgagee might also exact it?—He might, or he might forego it. Many a man is in arrear with his mortgage interest now, but the State must keep the man up to the mark, and up to time.

7812. Speaking

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

7812. Speaking about the difficulty about the mortgage, it would take away the temptation to mortgage to a large degree?—It would not only take away the temptation, but it would also take away the land itself. He could not mortgage it because he has mortgaged it, except, of course, that he might create a second mortgage; he might do that.

7813. You spoke about the larger amount of produce raised on the small holdings in comparison with the larger holdings on the same area of land, did you not?—No, I do not think so. Did I?

7814. With regard to cows and other cattle and pigs and horses?—Oh, certainly; those are not mine; those are the agricultural returns, the statistics. There are more cattle and more pigs on the small holdings, according to the statistics, than on the large.

7815. You admit that on the same area of land there are more horses, more cows, and considerably more pigs; but, I think, you excepted sheep and lambs?—Yes, of course; and, in the case of horses, I say it is waste.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7816. I think I understood you to say with regard to farms, as well as to all businesses, that they were better on a large scale?—I think so, generally speaking.

7817. Is that your view, that farming must be better on a large scale?—I think it is more economically done in these days, and better in every respect.

7818. Do you think that farming on a large scale produces more, acre for acre?—Yes, I do; and I think that those figures I have handed in to the Committee, comparing this country with other countries, prove that.

7819. Is that the ground upon which you come to your conclusion?—To a very great extent, and observation also.

7820. Observation at home?—Yes.

7821. We have had it in evidence over and over again, without an exception, I believe, before this Committee, that the produce per acre is invariably greater in the case of small holdings?—You must always take that in this way: if you take a small holding upon a good bit of land as a small holding——

7822. I do not wish to interrupt you, but I will add this further: granted that the conditions of soil are the same, the temperature the same, and the natural fertility of the soil the same, that then the small holder, by his cultivation alone can produce more per acre out of the land?—Well, I must disagree with the witnesses; that is all.

7823. You do disagree with them?—I do.

7824. We had a witness here last Wednesday, who stated that during the last four years his average for wheat was 48 bushels per acre. Will you be surprised to hear that. You gave your average as 28, I think?—That is the average of the returns.

7825. Yes?—I can give you big farmers who do it. I think I can show you some now.

7826. On the average of four years?—Yes; I am not sure. I will not say for certain, but I think I can give you some figures pretty nearly, if not quite equal to those. I am not quite sure; you take me by surprise; but I can give you individual cases from my report.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

7827. Over an average of years?—Over an average of years; no, I cannot give you it off-hand. The highest here I have, of a very large farm in Cambridge, is 11 combs, then 10·3, then I have nine, and so on. Yes, here is one: 48 bushels; another 49; that is in 1863 and 1864; 48·59 and 49·36; 43·86 in 1874, and 49·92 in 1868; in 1870, 46·70.

7828. You are giving us the maximum?—No; the average yield per acre over a series of 21 years. Those are pretty near, and that is a farm of 800 to 1,000 acres. The average there for the 21 years was 36·76. That is longer than four years, and the average for 16 years was 38·56. This is in Cambridgeshire. Mr. William Little, my colleague on the Royal Commission, who is a most accurate man in figures, has got them ever since he went into business in 1859. He gives the values: "Average price per quarter of corn sold," and "Average value per acre" for a series of years, and so on. At all event sI haveg ot two in consecutive years, and one other more than yours, and one or two very near; taking it off-hand.

Chairman.

7829. What are you quoting from?—My Report to the Royal Commission of 1882, page 18.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7830. You say you know scores and hundreds of people who have become small owners?—Or occupiers.

7831. On small wages?—I do not say the ordinary agricultural labourer's wages, but, as I put it, as a foreman, or as a shepherd, or as a cattle man.

7832. Just the pick of the agricultural class?—Yes, the pick of the men very often.

7833. You believe that if the State, either by the local authority, or direct, were to provide land for the labouring classes, that the cultivators would be less independent. I think those were your words?—I do think so.

7834. You said, in reply to Mr. Collings, that you did not object that the State should do anything which would be for the public good?—Quite so.

7835. If it should be found on evidence that the intenser farming of the small holders should produce more than that of the large then you would not object?—Then my argument falls to the ground.

7836. I understood you to say that the State must be very exacting in the matter of quit-rent?—I think so.

7837. Do you understand the scheme proposed by Mr. Collings' Bill that the local authority should borrow money at 3 per cent., and that the land, so far as three-fourths of its value is concerned, should be let at an equivalent of about 4 per cent. of the purchase-money?—As I have said, I have unfortunately not had an opportunity of reading Mr. Collings' Bill for this year; but I have read his bills in former years, and I think it is the same. I have thought about it, and I think in that way you make the local authority a speculator. They are to borrow this money at 3 per cent., and

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

let it at 4 per cent. They must have a margin, as I understand; is not that so?

7838. Yes, and if they borrowed at 3 per cent. and let at 4 per cent., there would be 1 per cent. margin for the repayment of the purchase money?—I see.

7839. Do not you think that one-third, 33⅓ per cent. of the rental, would be a sufficient margin for all risk?—No, not in these days. Many rents have gone down more than 33⅓ per cent. considerably; very much more.

7840. The 33⅓ per cent. only represents a depreciation of 25 per cent.; 33⅓ on the purchase represents only 25 per cent. on the rental?—Yes, certainly.

7841. Do you understand that in the event of the local authority letting out that land it would always have a margin every year as a guarantee against loss, so that it need not be exacting as to the quit rent, because it would be gradually acquiring the freehold, and in 49 years become the absolute freeholder of the property?—The owner would.

7842. The local authority?—So much the worse, then. What is the local authority to do with it? You want the man to become the owner, not the local authority.

7843. I am examining with the view to show that it is to the benefit of the local authority to acquire the land and take the margin for itself and to give the small cultivator a guaranted perpetual occupancy; that would be just to the local authority, would it not?—I am afraid I do not follow you, quite; but I agree with you in this respect, that I think the occupier who has what has been called stability or fixity of tenure, with good and fair rights of compensation for improvement, is in a far better position than the owner.

7844. You do?—Yes, if that is what you mean.

7845. And you mean that the local authority would run little risk in that case?—In that case at all events less risk.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

7846. In what years were you acting as Sub-Commissioner on the Duke of Richmond's Commission?—From August 1879 to March 1882.

7847. And during that time it was a part of your duty to examine carefully into the question of small holdings, especially in Lincolnshire?—Yes.

7848. You have a very considerable practical knowledge of farming, I think?—Yes, fairly so; perhaps I may say I am a farmer's son, and both my grandfathers were farmers, and I was bred up upon a farm.

7849. The small holdings, you say, are very numerous in that county?—Yes.

7850. In addition to the Isle of Axholme, it would be accurate, I think, to say that there are very considerable tracts of land in different parts of the county that are almost entirely peopled by these small holders?—Yes, that is so.

7851. You have had, then, exceptional advantages for arriving at a practical opinion upon the results of that system?—I think I have.

7852. Probably there are very few people in the country who have had more?—That I must

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

leave others to judge; I have told you what they are.

7853. I gather from your evidence that your inquiries have led you to this general conclusion, that while you approve of small holdings *per se*, and would like, if possible, to see them encouraged, you do not think they can be artificially created with advantage?—That is quite my view.

7854. And, in many respects, you think they compare very unfavourably with large ones?—Yes; that fairly sums up my ideas.

7855. It is the case in Lincolnshire, I think, that there are a very great number of large farmers as well?—Certainly.

7856. You have the two systems, then, the small holding and the large-farm system, side by side, in the same county?—You have.

7857. And it affords special facilities for forming an opinion of the advantages of the two systems?—Yes; I may observe that this was one great reason why I wrote this special report upon it, as I mentioned, to begin with.

7858. The small holders in the Isle of Axholme, as far as I know, differ in one respect from small holders in other parts of the county; that they live generally in the villages?—Yes.

7859. Whereas in other parts of the country they live on their holdings; their houses, at all events, are required on the holdings?—Yes, to a very great extent. It is most remarkable in the Isle of Axholme that the small holders live in the villages, and their small holdings are away from the villages. The small holdings there are almost what we may imagine the commonable land or a great part of the lands in this country were before they were inclosed; they are in strips; strip A., strip B., strip C., and so on. There is no hedge between them. There is merely a little strip of grass.

7860. Then the system as it exists at the present moment in the Isle of Axholme would have this great advantage over a system that would have to be created in any part of the country where it did not exist at present, that in the Isle of Axholme they have not to build houses which would have to be built wherever the system was established for the first time?—Certainly that is so.

7861. I want to take you to the Isle of Axholme first, and to ask you one or two questions with regard to the condition of the people, and the condition of the farming there. Now as to the character of the farm; small farms as compared with large farms generally speaking, which should you say, from your personal experience was farmed the best, the land in the small farms or the land in the large farms?—Oh, I say the land in the large farms is farmed the best.

7862. I think you make some reference to that in your report, do you not?—I think I gave it in page 389 as to the Axholme people. I say, "The small holders there cultivated their land as well as the larger ones; their strips of land, taking them on an average, looked as clean and as tidy as the fields occupied by the larger farmers, and their crops seemed quite as good and as heavy. But in the small occupations in the other parts of the county, where, as I have before stated, the ordinary farm crops are grown, the comparison

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

comparison seemed to me to be certainly favourable to the large farms;" I think that is an answer to your question; that is on page 390.

7863. I observe that on page 389 you make this statement: "As in other classes, so amongst the small freeholders and small occupiers of the Isle, good and bad specimens are to be found. Here a strip of land is seen beautifully clean and evidently well cared for, there a strip foul, and full of weeds, unkempt and uncared for"?—Yes.

7864. That would be a fair general description I suppose, of the cultivation of the land in the Isle of Axholme?—Certainly. It was the fairest description I could write of what I saw.

7865. But on the whole you consider that, generally speaking, the land in the large farms was the better done of the two?—I do.

7866. You have given us some figures taken from the Agricultural Returns, as to the comparative number of stock kept upon various sized farms; but I should like to ask you as to your own experience of what you found in Lincolnshire as to the number of stock kept on those small holdings. I observe that on page 388 of your report, you say. "The absence of live stock on the small holdings is very striking. A sheep is rarely seen. I myself saw none, nor do there appear to be many cows or other horned stock on them"? – Yes.

7867. Do I understand that your personal experience would hardly lead you to think that the Agricultural Returns correctly represent the state of things as regards the small holdings and the keeping of stock?—Not as regards horned stock, certainly not. The Agricultural Returns include so many suburban holdings where a man keeps a cow for a dairy, and where people in a good position in life keep them too, and there is no distinction between cows and other sorts of stock. I think that leads to the column in the Agricultural Returns being so high for cattle.

7868. What you mean, I think, is this: that the greater number of cattle which it would appear from the Agricultural Returns are kept upon the small holdings as compared with the large ones, is to a great extent accounted for by cows kept upon what you call purely suburban holdings?—Yes, I think so.

7869. Did you find cows, as a rule, kept upon these small holdings either in the Isle of Axholme or the other parts of Lincolnshire?—No.

7870. Very rarely?—Very rarely.

7871. What was the reason of that?—In the Isle of Axholme it certainly was that the land was not sufficiently suitable for cows, and in the other parts of Lincolnshire the same thing, I think; certainly in the Isle of Axholme. You know they grow special crops which they sell; potatoes, especially.

7872. Is that the same in other parts of Lincolnshire?—Not to the same extent; only in some parts of it near Boston. In the other parts in north-east Lincolnshire the ordinary corn crops are grown.

7873. Is there any special reason why they should not keep cows on other holdings in the other parts of Lincolnshire?—No, I cannot

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

remember at this moment any special reason why they should not keep cows.

7874. Is it your recollection, generally speaking, that they were not kept?—Yes.

7875. I suppose there were some occasionally kept?—Of course.

7876. But it was not a regular thing that on the small holdings, as a matter of fact, they did keep cows?—No.

7877. Would it be correct to say that it was the exception rather than the rule?—I hardly like to say that. It is 10 years ago since I first went there; but certainly as I put here, "There do not appear to be many cows or other horned stock on them."

7878. Yes, I observe you say that; did it ever strike you to consider whether the keeping of cows might not have been encouraged on this small holding, or whether they might not have been kept with advantage?—That depends so much on the position; on some of them "yes"; on others again the answer would be "no."

7879. Then you pointed out to us (and that is given very fully in your report I observe on pages 390-391), that the amount of labour employed upon small fams as compared with the large farms is enormously greater?—Yes.

7880. On the whole do I understand you to say that the produce from the large farms is the greater of the two?—Yes, I say so.

7881. Then according to that, economically, in your view the small holding system is very unsuccessful?—Yes, as compared with the large one.

7882. That there is much more labour employed upon it?—Certainly.

7883. And on the whole less produce?—Yes.

7884. Now I understand you to say this as the result of your own careful personal investigation into the system of small holdings in Lincolnshire?—Certainly, that is so.

7885. Although you would gladly see the system of small holdings encouraged?—Certainly, because I think it is a good thing as an encouragement to good agricultural labourers; they do well.

7886. There were rather exceptionally unfavourable circumstances in existence at that time?—Undoubtedly. If it had not been for the unfavourable circumstances I should never have gone to investigate.

7887. Of course you were appointed in consequence of the great depression?—In consequence of the great depression.

7888. What was that depression owing to chiefly; seasons or prices, or both?—Both. Seasons perhaps, then, rather than prices.

7889. It began, if I rightly recollect, with a bad season?—It began with bad seasons; 1879 was dreadful.

7890. Then on top of a bad season a great fall in prices occurred?—Yes.

7891. Now as to the condition of the people themselves. On page 388 I observe rather a striking statement; I want to know whether these are your words or not: "Though I have said they are happy, yet I should note that it was remarked to me that the little proprietors work like negroes, and do not live so well as the inhabitants of the poorhouse; but all is made

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

amends for by possessing land." That is a quotation, is it not?—That is a quotation from Arthur Young.

7892. From Arthur Young, is it?—Yes; you will see I go on afterwards: "I found Arthur Young's description in the main very true. The small freeholders are poor, and now especially so. The past wet seasons have tried them terribly; 1880 has, it is thought, been a worse year for them than 1879, and previous years had been very bad. Vast numbers of them are in arrear with the interest on their mortgagee. Epworth Fair day, 1st October, is the day on which the interest on the mortgages of many of the small freeholders in that district is payable; and in former years one firm of solicitors at Epworth was in the habit of taking about 150 *l.* in small sums for such interest; but this year (1880) the same firm took some 15 *l.* only. Everybody of whom I inquired in fact told me the same thing. The small proprietors were in a very bad way."

7893. That would be hardly a fair description of their condition, I suppose, except in some years of depression?—I apprehend not; it would not be a fair description.

7894. Before the depression began had you any knowledge, or did you acquire any knowledge of their position at that time?—I acquired the knowledge at that time of what it had been previously. Then of course they had done well. They grew such splendid potatoes that they would make a small fortune, so to say, in one year; because potatoes are a most speculative crop; I think I mention that somewhere. Yes, I go on afterwards to speak about that, "Everyone who had a little money rushed to buy land, and the demand for it having been in excess of the supply its price had been unduly raised; purchasers had paid too much for it, and consequently borrowed too much on it, and occupiers paid too high a rent for it to be remunerative. Next it was said that the land was weary of growing potatoes; that that crop had been grown too frequently."

7895. You had opportunities, I think you have stated to-day, of conversing with a great number of the people?—Oh, yes, I conversed with these people.

7896. You examined into the system as well as you possibly could?—I did, honestly; as well as I possibly could.

7897. And they told you pretty freely what they thought about it?—After a time. Of course, at first, one has a difficulty of getting the truth from these men, but after a little chatting with them I was able to get it without much trouble.

7898. What was the general impression you derived from them; was it this, that they were in a bad way and found it very difficult indeed to make their land pay, but that they would rather keep it than not?—Yes; that was it, certainly.

7899. The general feeling?—Certainly.

7900. In spite of the hardship of their conditions, they still wished to keep the land, if possible?—Undoubtedly.

7901. Did you have any other instances to the contrary?—I had one or two, I think, but those were on the other side. I do not think I had any instance to the contrary in the Isle of Axholme, but on the other side of Lincolnshire I had.

7902. In the other parts of Lincolnshire?—Yes, I remember that. Here is one case at the bottom of page 389: "M. in the same parish." This is on the east coast.

7903. Between Leake and Grimsby, is it not?—Yes, that is so. "He could not," he said, "make both ends meet. He was much better off as a labourer, but bought his land because he considered that his master was getting 3 *d.* per day out of him which he thought he ought to get himself." Then another man says he worked harder than any labourer, and working so, was just able to make both ends meet.

7904. Do those instances refer to the Isle of Axholme?—No; they are on the other side.

7905. They refer to other parts of the country?—Yes. I do not think I heard a man on the Isle of Axholme say he would like to give it up.

7906. In the course of your inquiries did you find nobody who thought that the system was desirable?—Oh, yes; I did find that some people thought so.

7907. You had opposite opinions?—Yes, certainly.

7908. Could you give us any instances of that?—Yes, there are some on page 390. Here is a gentleman from the south of Boston, where there are a good many freeholders. He told me (I quote his words): "An industrious owner and tenant of a few acres is generally more prosperous, and gets more out of the land than larger farmers." Then there is another one, also, in the neighbourhood of Boston: "He considered the system (*i.e.*, of peasant proprietors or small freeholders) a good one. A thrifty man, with not more than about 10 acres, did well; but, with more than that, not so well. The smaller men, those with two acres or so, did very well, as they could work as labourers in addition to cultivating their own land." Then some of the small freeholders and small occupiers agreed in this view; for instance, W., at Goxhill" (that, again, is on the East Coast), "who owned 12 acres, which he had bought 20 years ago for 47 *l.* per acre, and which were mortgaged (though I did not find out for how much), thought that the small men were as well off as the large farmers, though none were doing very well just now." Then another, at Conisholme, "considered that the small holders did their land better than the large ones. Times were bad, but he was fairly well satisfied." Then another man, at North Somercotes (that is also on the coast), "stated his strong opinion to be 'that it would be better for all of us if the large farms were cut up into small holdings of from 50 to 100 acres each.'"

7909. I think you also gave evidence before the Commission?—Yes, twice.

7910. I have some recollection now (perhaps you can bear me out) that on this very point you said you had quoted in your report all the instances you found of people who were in favour of the system. Do you remember whether that is so or not?—I should be sorry to say whether it

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

it was so, without looking at it; but I have no doubt your recollection is quite as good as mine on the subject.

7911. All this evidence you gave then, of course, referred to a period of great depression, and it was some years ago. Have you any knowledge of the state of things in the present day?—Only by report; I have not personally investigated it.

7912. What are the reports you have heard?—I mean I have been down to Lincolnshire since, but I have not personally investigated the question. I have heard about it. The reports are that the Isle of Axholme men struggle on and keep on; they manage to exist, and keep on going through the bad times; but with regard to the other men (the men on the east side), I have heard rather the contrary, that a good many of them have gone to the wall.

7913. Altogether?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

7914. The small freeholders?—The small freeholders; the peasant proprietors on the eastern side between Boston and Leake.

7915. The eastern part, and South Lincolnshire too?—No, I cannot say South Lincolnshire.

7916. Boston to Sutton Bridge?—No.

7917. You mean the north-eastern part?—Yes; the north-eastern part.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

7918. That is to say between Boston and Grimsby?—Yes.

7919. There you have heard unfavourable accounts of their present condition?—There I have heard unfavourable accounts.

7920. Now I should like to ask your opinion from your general practical experience as to which of the three classes have been able to weather the depression through which we have passed best, the large tenants, or the small tenants, or the small owners of land?—On the whole I should think the medium sized tenant has fared the best.

7921. And next to him?—And next to him the large tenant, and then the small owners come in worst.

7922. You think that throughout this period of depression it is the small owner who has suffered worse than any of the classes?—Yes, I do.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

7923. Is that last answer of yours founded on any personal experience during the last five or six years?—The small owners?

7924. Having faired worse than the medium or large holder?—Not personal experience in the sense that I have actually made a point of investigating it.

7925. Because we have had it in evidence here repeatedly, that during the time of depression the small occupier or small owner has done better than the large owner: not from one witness but from several?—I should rather be inclined to think that the small occupier may have done better. In fact, my opinion is that he has done a great deal better than the small owner; it is the small owner who has felt the bad times most.

7926. I do not want you to contrast the small owner with the small occupier, but to get your answer to this question if you will allow me to put it. In your opinion, has the small farmer done worse than the large farmer during this period of depression?—I say the man who has suffered least of all, the class of farmers, is the medium-sized farmer, and by medium-sized farmer I mean a man farming from 300 to 500 acres.

7927. He has suffered less than the others?—He has suffered less than the others. The big men have suffered very much more, but most of all the small men.

7928. Then you believe that the small farmer has suffered more than either the medium or large farmers during the depression?—Yes, I do; the last ten years.

7929. That is contrary to the evidence we have received from a number of witnesses?—I am very sorry. I am afraid my evidence is contrary to that of other witnesses, but I give it as honestly as I can.

7930. I am quite aware of that. You do not found it on personal experience among these people?—Not on personal investigation.

7931. I think you said that the diminution of small farms, or small owners, had possibly been going on to some slight extent?—Yes, I did, possibly.

7932. That 58½ was in 1875, and 60 in 1888, the average size of farms; that is to say the average size of farms between 1875 and 1888 had increased slightly?—Yes, slightly.

7933. During that time there would be a large increase in the number of those small holdings held in connection with the villa building going on all over the country, these being included in the statistics; the increase in the size of farms would be greater than those figures indicate?—No; we must not forget that there is this possible room for error, namely, that the area over which the average is taken varies at the different times.

7934. The local area?—The whole; the entire area.

7935. So that those figures are not worth much?—You cannot deduce any very accurate argument from the 58 and the 60.

7936. You said you thought small cultivators had not been lessened by legislation?—No, I do not think they have.

7937. On the contrary, you seemed to think that the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883, and the Allotments Compensation Act of 1887, had helped them?—I said, "tended to help them," as far as legislation can.

7938. There has not been much time for those Acts to have much force, has there?—1883?

7939. One thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, the second Act?—The Agricultural Holdings Act is 1883; that is six years.

7940. The Compensation Act is 1887?—The Compensation Act of 1883.

7941. You talk of the Allotments Compensation Act, 1887?—As well.

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

7942. That has not had much time to operate yet?—Not yet, but I have known cases under it. I have had cases sent me up.

7943. That may have tended to help people having small holdings and has helped them?—It has; I could have brought the Report and shown it to you. It appeared in a newspaper.

7944. It has scarcely had time in 18 months to increase the number of small holdings?—I should not presume to say so. I say the legislation tends in that direction, that is all.

7945. You also said that the inclosures tended to increase the number of small holdings?—Yes.

7946. Have they probably increased the number of small owners?—Yes, I think so.

7947. Do not you think at the same time they have tended to lessen the number of people directly interested in the land?—That depends altogether upon what you mean by "people directly interested in the land."

7948. Everybody who had a right to turn an animal out on the common and had common rights?—The difficulty that has arisen in all these cases is that so many people thought they had a right but they had not, and they did it although they had not the right.

7949. They possessed the right?—I do not know whether they did possess the right.

7950 They used it?—They used it; but then of course the law could not recognise a wrong.

7951. We are not talking of the law?—I beg your pardon; we are, as regards Acts of Parliament, because you gentlemen make the law.

7952. What I am talking of is the sentiment in the mind of these people. Their having the power of using the land necessarily engendered on their part an interest in the land. The use of a thing engenders an interest in it; you admit that I suppose?—If it is sentiment I do not.

7953. Leave the sentiment out and say the use?—I should not think it would give them interest in the land. If they gather some fuel and some furze they do not care much about the land.

7954. They could turn their stock out?—In some cases; but in all those cases where they had the right they were compensated.

7955. But a number of others used the right although they were not compensated and probably had no legal right. Those people were interested in the land?—Yes, I suppose so.

7956. They lost their interest in it under the Inclosure Act?—I am not sure that they lost their interest; I do not know. It depends upon what you mean by "their interest."

7957. They were using land for certain definite uses that were profitable to themselves and they lost that right under the Inclosure Act; therefore they lost their interest in the land?—Yes; I cannot find fault with your argument there.

7958. Then you would be inclined to agree with me that the effect of the Inclosure Acts, although they increased the actual number of small owners, lessened the number of people directly interested in the land?—No, it lessened the number of people who thought they had an interest in the land.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

7959. Who used the land?—Well, who rightfully or wrongfully (put those words in if you like) used the land.

7960. I have no objection to put those words in?—Yes, and who thought they had an interest in the land.

7961. So that as a result of the Inclosure Act we have a smaller number of people interested in the land?—With my qualification.

7962. You say that you object to a Bill or to any legislation that would use public money for the purpose of putting these people (agricultural labourers and others) on the land as small occupiers or owners on account of (if held by the State) its probably lessening their independence?—I think so.

7963. And you quoted the rate of wages in Oxfordshire and other neighbouring districts at about 10*s.* or 11*s.* per week with certain other things; allowances of a house sometimes, and so on?—Yes.

7964. Do not you think that the independence of a man is likely to be greater if he has money, received from a local authority, than if he has to live by means of concessions made in additions to his wages?—No, I do not, because they are not concessions. He has pretty much a right to them, and can get them, and does get them. There is no question about concessions.

7965. They are not a regular rate of wages; they vary with caprice?—Not at all.

7966. Well they vary with the ability of the farmer to give them?—No; in many places they are rights insisted upon, and the farmer is in a poor state, and in a very bad position, if he does not give them.

7967. They are not conditions that are likely to encourage independence, are they?—I do not know. I think they are, if a man can insist upon them.

7968. If a man can insist upon them?—They do, and they can insist upon them.

7969. Why should a man, having land from the local authority, not be in as good a position?—I think you a little misunderstood me. What I say is this: if you enable a man to look to the country, or the local authority for money to assist him in his great object in life, you take away, to a certain extent, the zest that that man has to attain that object; he does not work so hard; he is not so thrifty and so careful.

7970. But is not he likely to be more thrifty and more careful, if the object, by the intervention of the State becomes attainable, which is now unattainable, to a large extent?—There, you see, I differ from you. I say it is attainable to every one at the present time.

7971. Then you contend that it is possible for an agricultural labourer with wages of 10*s.* or 11*s.* a-week, and certain allowances which you have mentioned to save enough money to take a small holding?—I do.

7972. You say that that is a career open to every agricultural labourer?—I say so; and as I said in my examination-in-chief to the honourable Chairman,

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

Chairman, you can hardly go into a parish in England, but what you find an example of it.

7973. Did you ever know a parish where there were six examples of that?—It depends upon the size of the parish.

7974. Any parish; I will give you the off-chance of the size of the parish?—Oh, yes, I think so.

7975. Six men who have been agricultural labourers, have now become small farmers?—Well, I can almost, just on the spur of the moment, give you six names in a parish in Oxfordshire.

7976. I do not mean, of course, exceptional men, such as carters?—I do; you must take them altogether; it is not fair without you take the whole.

7977. I am taking them altogether, and you are taking them apart; you are taking the exceptional men?—I am taking them as they were.

7978. You are taking your carter and bailiff, or sub-bailiff?—Yes.

7979. And the best men in the district?—Certainly; I say they generally are those.

7980. Quite so; but then those are the men who are getting more wages than the 10*s.* or 11*s.* a-week standard?—Yes, certainly.

7981. I am speaking of the 10*s.* or 11*s.* a week?—I do not say you find a very great number of the common ordinary agricultural labourer.

7982. You admit they are very few?—No, I do not admit they are very few. There are a considerable number of them, but I admit that you will a deal easier find the better class of men, the carters, the ploughmen, the shepherds, and so on.

7983. At a higher rate of wages?—It is not only a higher rate of wages; it is a better head on their shoulders.

7984. They get a higher rate of wages, because they have got better heads?—Yes, perhaps so.

7985. The two things go together, as a rule?—Yes; not always.

7986. With reference to the population of rural districts, have you ever experienced that the rural population is diminishing in agricultural districts?—Yes, I think it is.

7987. Do not you think that is a bad thing?—To a certain extent, yes.

7988. And you also admit that on the small farms you have a larger number of labourers employed than on the larger farms?—Yes.

7989 So that you could do away with this diminution of population probably by the diminution of large farms?—I do not quite see that.

7990. I say if you have a larger number of labourers employed on the small holdings, and small farms, than on large farms, if you have small holdings increased you will have a larger number of people in the country?—Not in the country altogether. You may have it in a particular rural district, but that would be a very bad thing, because I do not think there would be enough to keep these men. Men do not leave a rural district unless there is a good reason for it.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

7991. You would check their leaving the rural district by an increase in the number of small holdings?—Then you would make them doubly poor.

7992. You said just now that these men are not necessarily doubly poor in small holdings, but that they get a good living, or a fair living?—But you are going, you see, as I put it, to artificially increase them.

7993. Oh, no, I said nothing about artifically increasing them. That is another question altogether. If we could have a larger number of small holdings under proper conditions, you would have a larger number of people employed upon them than upon large holdings?—Yes, you may; if those figures are right.

7994. That is a good thing, is it not?—No, that is a waste of labour.

7995. But a good thing for these people in the rural district; a good thing to have plenty of labourers on the land?—I doubt it.

7996. You admitted just now that diminution was not desirable?—No, I said it existed; but not that it was desirable or undesirable.

7997. I understood you to say that the diminution of the rural population was not a good thing in a national point of view?—I do not think I said that.

7998. You do not think that?—You did not put the question.

7999. Do you think it a good thing?—From a national point of view?

8000. Yes?—That opens up a very wide field. It certainly is ill, from a national point of view, if you get below a certain number; it is certainly also ill from a national point of view, if you get above a certain number.

8001. That may be; but there is a general feeling, and a general statement made now (we have had it repeatedly in the course of our evidence), that the diminution in the rural population has been going on for several decades, and that that is undesirable in a national point of view?—Well, it may or may not be; I am not at all sure. If you take our colonies into consideration, I should say it was a capital thing for some of the rural population to be out in them, and a capital thing for the whole country.

8002. We are not looking at it from a colonial point of view?—No; but from the national point of view, taking the colonies and the home country altogether.

8003. You say that we do not want any new laws to encourage these small holding?—No, that is my idea.

8004. And you cannot suggest any method by which they should be encouraged?—I do not know that I was asked.

8005. You were asked with reference to legislation. On the reference to this Committee there is a question as to legislation being useful for increasing them. I think you will see that?—"Facilities which exist for the creation;" that is what you mean?

8006. Yes; those facilities may be extended?—"Either in connection with an improved system of local government or otherwise, those facilities may be extended."

8007. Yes?—No; my idea is, as I say, that you

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

you should leave it to natural economic laws which regulate those things.

8008. Do you think the present condition of the land laws of this country, certainly within the last generation, has been calculated to encourage small holdings?—Yes, I do. As I have said in my evidence-in-chief, I think the Settled Land Act has, and I think the improved and cheapened system of conveyancing has, been calculated to encourage small holdings.

8009. Those are recent?—Quite recent.

8010. Before that you think the tendency of the laws was rather to aggregate the land?—Undoubtedly; settlements without the power of sale to the tenant for life tended to that. After all, you know the settlements that are usually spoken of apply only to the larger estates.

8011. Has not the tendency also been for the larger estates to absorb the smaller freehold estates?—I think so.

8012. And so did away with small owners?—That has been the tendency as regards what I have called the yeoman. A man has 200 or 300 acres of land; if he can put the value of that into a business in Birmingham or elsewhere and make 30 per cent. of the money, it is a deal better than keeping it in a farm and making 8 per cent. of it.

8013. The tendency has also been to give fancy prices for these small freeholds, to absorb them into bigger freeholds, has it not?—Yes, in some cases.

8014. And that has placed the man who would like to occupy at a disadvantage in the market?—Yes, at times.

8015. So that there is a tendency in that direction?—I quite admit there was a tendency in that direction.

8016. Do you think that would be overcome by the changes in the law made recently?—Yes, I think so.

8017. That is the recent legislation to which you referred?—Yes. Every acre of land can be sold now.

8018. Sufficient for the purpose?—Yes, except the mansion and the curtilage.

8019. Without any further legislation being necessary?—Yes; and even that can be sold by application to the Court of Chancery.

8020. You said something about fruit farms; are you aware of many large fruit farms in this country?—No, personally, I do not know many. Lord Sudeley's, in Worcestershire, is what I have principally heard of, and I have read of those that Mr. Whitehead alludes to, in Kent. I have seen some other fruit farms, I cannot call to mind where.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

8021. How long has this Settled Land Act been in operation?—It was passed in 1881.

8022. Eight or nine years?—Yes. I am not sure that it was not 1882.

8023. I think it was 1882; but that is near enough?—It is 1882, I believe.

8024. However, it has been in operation about seven or eight years?—Yes.

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

8025. And is the sale of the Blenheim Estate the only case that has come under your notice since the passing of the Act?—Oh, no. I brought that because it being in my own neighbourhood, I could actually show you the conditions of sale and the particulars. I could actually give them to you, hand them in to the Committee; but it is by no means an exception.

8026. Has the sale of land been very general in the country in consequence of that Act?—If anybody has wanted to sell it he has been able to do it.

8027. Has it resulted to any large extent in the sale of land, in the same way that it did on the Blenheim Estate?—I do not know; I cannot tell you.

8028. You do not know whether it has or not?—So far as my knowledge is concerned, I have had other cases before me.

8029. So that, so far as the Committee can ascertain, you do not know what effect that has had except in one or two cases?—So far as I am personally concerned, I do know that it has taken place in those and other cases; but I do not think there are any returns that have been issued. I do not think there are any compiled of the actual acreage of land that is sold in any one year; but I believe I am correct in saying that steps are being taken now, at this present moment, to ascertain the actual acreage of land that has been sold in England by the leading firms of auctioneers in London and the leading centres during the last 50 years, or even a longer period. I believe attempts are now being made to ascertain that at this present moment.

8030. Is it your opinion that landlords are very generally agreeable to sell land to small holders?—If they can get a good price, yes.

8031. They will sell it to anyone at a certain price?—Certainly.

8032. I heard you say several times that you think small holdings are desirable?—Oh, yes.

8033. We have had much evidence here showing that landowners will not sell at a price at which it is possible to buy, for these purposes. My impression of the evidence is that most of our witnesses have given evidence to show that land is not available for small holdings; what have you to say to that?—Then I should not agree with that evidence.

8034. But supposing that some witnesses who spoke in one or two cases from personal experience should have the misfortune to disagree with you?—It is very difficult to generalise in a matter of this kind. It so often happens that the land that is required and wanted for a small holding is near a town. By a "town" I do not mean a large town, but a country town. Now that land is of considerable value. It has a prospective building value very often beyond its mere intrinsic value at the time; and in cases of that sort the chances are that there would be a very great diversity of opinion, far more than there is usually, in the ideas of the would-be buyer and the seller, as to the value of that land; and I can quite understand in such a case as that, that a witness may say, and truthfully say, that he could not obtain the land.

8035. I do not think such a case as that would be

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

be quite a fair case for questioning. I wish to keep it quite to the agricultural districts apart from building prospective value?—Even there you see it arises because even in our agricultural villages you get a village of 500 or 600, or even a greater number of inhabitants. The land round there, although not of course to be compared to the prospective value of building land near London or near a large town, nevertheless has some increased value, and there the difference arises between the two. You see it is precisely the same difficulty as has so often arisen with regard to allotments. It was often said that allotments were so highly rented. It was often forgotten, in making that statement, that the piece of land that was let for allotment was, from its contiguity to the town, of far greater value than the ordinary agricultural land lying a very very short distance beyond it.

8036. I understand you to be best acquainted with Oxfordshire?—Yes, I know something of Oxfordshire.

8037. You know the city of Oxford of course?—I do.

8038. And Littlemore, a village near?—I do, well.

8039. I know a case there where only a fence parted two plots; in one case 1¾ acres fetched 12 *l.* a year, and on the other side of the fence I think land was fetching 30 *s.* to 35 *s.* a year per acre?—Yes.

8040. How do you account for that?—I think you know Littlemore too.

8041. How do you account for that?—Is not it to be accounted for in the fact that one is stone brash, and the other is good soil. There is a great deal of difference in some of the land in Littlemore.

8042. There are just a few elm trees, the usual fencing, about there, a frequent fencing at any rate, separating the two plots, but precisely the same soil?—The same soil, the one let at 12 *l.* a year and the other at 30 *s.*

8043. A plot of 1¾ acres fetched 12 *l.* a year, and, if I remember rightly, the land on the other side, belonging to one of the Colleges, fetched 35 *s.* a year?—Probably that 35 *s.* was for part of a very large extent of land. Perhaps that 35 *s.* went over a very large area, and was part of a large farm.

8044. A field of four or five acres I should think?—A field of four or five acres going with many others, so that your 35 *s.* was spread over the lot, and a great deal of it may have been very bad.

8045. I should like you to explain the difference in the value of the land on the one side and on the other, because the difference is so enormous?—Well, I am trying to explain it. Of course if I was on the spot I might be able to explain it to you better, but I am trying to explain that this land at 35 *s.* was probably part of a large farm. Then it is quite easily explicable; and that the other 1¾ acres on the other side was taken perhaps by a butcher in Oxford (perhaps it was fine grass land) to put a few sheep in, just as they came into Oxford.

8046. It was cultivated with the spade?—By a small owner?

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

8047. By a small holder?—As allotments?

8048. Yes?—Quite so; close to Oxford; it would let for anything; and perhaps the other man who let his land for 35 *s.* could get 12 *l.* for an acre and three-quarters of it. He may have been foolish in not getting it.

8049. You admit there is a considerable difference in the rent of the larger and the smaller holding in that case?—No; I cannot admit that because I do not know the difference in the size.

8050. Per acre: in the one case it was over 6 *l.* an acre, and in the other about 30 *s.* to 35 *s.* an acre?—Yes; but then you must take the circumstances into consideration around them. My explanation is that the one is part of a large and the other is a small holding.

8051. We have had evidence that there are cases where land cannot be got for small holdings, and that there are people in the parishes who want small holdings. Now how would you remedy this state of things?—Well; I can hardly believe it.

8052. You cannot believe that there is a parish in which small holdings cannot be obtained?—That is pretty much so.

8053. I cannot undertake the task of getting you to believe it if that is so?—It may be so in very exceptional cases. You may bring evidence to show it, but I say, taking the country through, it is obtainable.

8054. You were very much concerned, I understood, about the want of economy of labour in the small holdings, as against the large ones?—No; I do not think I am much concerned. I put the figures before you; it is for the Committee to draw their conclusion.

8055. You were in some trouble about the drill?—No; I just instanced that.

8056. Did you not mention about the drill?—I did; I said that on a 30-acre holding, if a drill cost 30 *l.*, it would be 1 *l.* an acre; a drill would do just as well for a 400-acre farm, and then it would be 1 *s.* 6 *d.* an acre.

8057. The drill of itself would as soon drill 50 acres on 50 different holdings, as it would on the one holding, would it not?—Of course it would.

8058. So that that difficuly really disappears, does it not?—No; because it is the difference between 50 people and one.

8059. Take 50 different holdings, or take 25 different holdings?—Then you have got 25 different people wanting that drill at one and the same time; that is a difficulty, and they will squabble over it. You want a headman, and then you can do it.

8060. I am glad you remind me of that. It would not take the drill longer to drill the number of acres in the different holdings than it would to drill the same number on the one farm, except for the travelling along the road from holding to holding, which it often has to do now on the one farm. You do not get 50 acres of barley all in one field; the drill has to travel from point to point?—Oh, yes; you do get 50 acres sometimes.

8061. You would not withhold your consent on account of the drill, would you?—I instanced the drill as showing you that there is a great

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

deal of waste, in my judgment, in small holdings as regards labour; that is all.

Chairman.

8062. There is only one very small question I want to ask you. We have had the law of primogeniture mentioned. What is the actual statute under which the law of primogeniture comes into force on intestacy; is it the Wills Act?—No, certainly not.

8063. Long before that?—Not any statute; but I do not remember the actual origin of the law.

8064. The point I wish to put to you is this: Was the custom of primogeniture in force before the law, or did the law create the custom?—The law created the custom. The old Saxon law did not recognise primogeniture at all. It came in with the Normans. You find that in lands of gavel-kind and borough-English tenure up to this day the law of primogeniture does not exist.

8065. You think the law preceded the custom, and not that the law was the embodiment of the custom which it found existing?—I am afraid I do not quite understand what you mean by the custom of primogeniture.

8066. The custom of primogeniture being that the real estate goes to the eldest son on the death of the father?—On the death of the father intestate.

Chairman—continued.

8067. Whether intestate or with a will?—As I understand, the custom of primogeniture means this: that in the settlement of family estates the estates are entailed on the eldest son. But the law of primogeniture is that, on the death of an intestate, all real property passes to the eldest son.

8068. Then the question I put to you is, Has the custom of primogeniture been the result of the law, or do you think that the law has followed upon custom?—I think the custom has followed the law.

8069. You think the law was first, and then the custom grew up?—I am not quite sure as to the origin of the law.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8070. Seeing that it is a very difficult question indeed; did not the custom extend back to the military tenures of the Normans?—Undoubtedly. That is the difficulty that is passing through my mind.

8071. Where it went from the father or the holder, we will say, to the eldest son, with the same obligation of tenure?—Quite so. My impression is that primogeniture was Norman-French law, and that at the time of the Conquest it superseded the old Saxon law.

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Friday, 5th July 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Viscount Curzon.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

MR. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. RICHARD BURDON HALDANE, a Member of the House; Examined.

Chairman.

8072. YOU are a Member of the House of Commons, and I think that you are also a member of the English Bar?—Yes.

8073. I believe that you have taken a considerable amount of interest in the land question as affecting small holdings?—I have.

8074. Has your attention been confined to this country, or to Scotland; or has it been given to both countries?—To both; mainly, I should say, to Scotland, but considerably to this country also.

8075. As regards Scotland (with regard to which country I think it would be advisable if in the main you confine your evidence to-day), what is the difficulty which is felt in that country with regard to obtaining small holdings?—In my experience, with the change that is set in in public opinion upon that subject now, there is, at all events in a great part of the country, no difficulty in obtaining land for small holdings if you could find people in the mood to purchase it, and seeing their way to carrying the transaction out.

8076. Is there any disinclination on the part of owners of land to sell it for these purposes?—No, I think not; but, of course, I can only speak for certain districts. I may say that my experience recently was this: we desired to set on foot a movement for the purchase of small holdings in the county of Haddington, which I represent; and I went round to the agents of the proprietors of suitable land in Edinburgh, and I found a very considerable willingness, which was almost universal, to facilitate the movement in every way, and to sell to us the land we wanted. So far as the land was concerned my belief is that we could have got as much as we required.

8077. Is your knowledge of the matter confined to Haddington, or to what other counties does it extend?—I should say it extends also to some parts of Perthshire; but I speak there more from general impressions; I live in the county of Perthshire, and I speak as to that county from my general knowledge of the place. I have no doubt what I say of Haddingtonshire applies to Perthshire too; but in Haddingtonshire I have tried the experiment and I speak from actual experience.

Chairman—continued.

8078. Then the difficulty arises from the absence of means on the part of those desirous of purchasing, to enable them to carry out the purchase?—It is partly that, and partly the novelty of the transaction; the Scotch labourers are a cautious people. Perhaps it might be of interest to the Committee if I were to state that we have in Haddingtonshire a considerable number of very well-to-do farm servants of the better class, who have got savings in many cases amounting to a hundred, or two or three hundred pounds; and those people would not be at all indisposed to invest those savings, so far as my experience goes, in becoming small farmers if they saw their way to carrying out the transaction.

8079. Do you suppose that the bad times for agriculture, which have unfortunately obtained for the last 10 years, have acted in a way to prevent these people to whom you refer investing their savings in land?—I think not. I think that the absence of motive has arisen from the circumstance that the transaction is a novel one.

8080. Is there anything in the law as it stands at present which acts as a preventive to persons obtaining small holdings if they desire to do so?—Possibly the law may be bettered; but there is a means which I think has been overlooked in the way of enabling would-be purchasers of small holdings to acquire them. There is a prevalent impression that the Building Society Acts only apply in towns, and to what we may call urban buildings. As a matter of fact, there is nothing in these Acts to prevent people from making use of their provisions for the purpose of becoming purchasers of small holdings by means of the facilities which the Building Society Acts afford.

8081. Would you briefly state what the effect of the Building Society Acts is?—Under the term "Building Society Acts" I include two things, the Building Society Act, properly so called, and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, which is ordinarily used in connection with it. A building society proper is a society consisting

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Chairman—continued.

of members of two classes; the one class comes into the society for the purpose of finding an investment for its savings. The members of that class take shares, which they pay up by small instalments, extending over a period of years; and in the end the share becomes a fully paid-up share, and the person entitled to it receives, either gradually or at the end of the time, interest upon his investment. The way in which they find their interest is by lending to the members of the other class, that is to say, the borrowing members as they are called, the transaction being that an advance is made to a borrowing member of the whole amount of the share to which he would ultimately become entitled as paid up if he had paid up the whole of his instalments, and the amount of that advance is secured by a conveyance to the society of the plot of land which the borrowing member purchases with the amount so advanced to him. The loan is paid off by instalments, which are represented by what he has to pay from time to time on his shares.

8082. Is the plot of land so acquired limited to any particular uses?—No; the terms of the Act are really quite general.

8083. I presume the word "Building" in the title of the Act would lead people to suppose that the land was to be used for building purposes only?—That is so, and it is possible that when the Legislature passed the Act they thought of that, but there is nothing in the terms of the statute to prevent people from acquiring plots of land for the purpose of small holdings under that statute.

8084. Is there any limit as to the size of the plot of land?—No. I may say this as a sort of qualification of the statement, that the provision exempting the transactions from stamp duty limits the transactions so exempted to 500*l.* In that sense there is a limit; but of course you can use the building society in the ordinary way if you like to pay the stamp duty, which would be ordinarily payable on the transaction.

8085. You say that in your experience these Acts are not taken advantage of at present for the purpose of acquiring small holdings for agricultural purposes?—They are not at all taken advantage of.

8086. But they are taken advantage of for building purposes, are they not?—They are taken advantage of for building purposes in towns.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8087. Are the Building Societies Acts the same in England and in Scotland?—They are the same in both countries.

Chairman.

8088. Do I understand your remarks to apply to Scotland only, or to England also?—To both. I may say that my attention was first drawn to the possibility of using the Acts in that way in connection with the question of copyhold enfranchisement, which could be carried out under the provisions of the statute in the same way as the acquisition of small holdings. There is nothing in the statute which limits the transactions under it to building transactions in towns, strictly so called.

Chairman—continued.

8089. Do you suggest any alteration of the law by which the Building Society Acts could be made to bear upon this question, or do you confine your suggestion to bringing the operation of these Acts more before the people?—I see no necessity for any alteration of the law. It appears to me that if these Acts were better known and used they would be found sufficient to carry out a good deal of what it is desired to effect. I may explain that the other Act to which I referred, the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876, is somewhat different in its scheme from the Building Societies Act, and can be used, and is sometimes used, in connection with it. The Building Societies Act only enables the society to make an advance on mortgage of a plot of land belonging to the member who borrows; it does not enable the society to undertake the building of small farm buildings or cottages or anything of that kind upon the land; but the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, on the other hand, enables the society not simply to lend, as is the case with the Building Societies Act, but to actually hold the land and erect buildings on it with the subscriptions of the members, and to carry out the principle of co-operative building. For example, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act it would be open to the society not merely to advance money to its members for the purpose of enabling them to purchase small holdings, but to acquire a considerable piece of land and put buildings upon it, and cut the land so built upon up into small holdings, and either sell them or let them to members. I may say that in Haddingtonshire we have incorporated a society especially for that purpose, which we hope will come into active operation in the ensuing autumn; whether it be successful or not depends entirely, as it seems to me, upon whether the people are prepared to take advantage of the facilities which would be so open to them.

8090. Do you know of any instances in which the Industrial and Provident Societies Act has been put in force in that manner?—I am bound to say I know of none as yet; it may have been so used. I have not made any exhaustive inquiry, but I know of none in which that has actually been the case.

8091. But, as I understand, you think that the machinery of it might with great advantage be used in the direction which you have indicated?—That is my opinion.

8092. Is it your experience generally that there is anything in the law, as it stands at present, to prevent small people acquiring holdings either as owners or as tenants?—Of course I can conceive that there are parts of the country, and possibly a great part of the country, in which the owners of land are not willing to sell the land for the purposes of small holdings, and there it might be right to give compulsory powers of purchase, such as do not at present exist.

8093. In saying that, are you referring to Scotland or to England?—I am referring to both just at present. But in my experience, if there were really a disposition on the part of people to go actively into the transaction, so far as some parts

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Chairman—continued.

parts at any rate of Scotland are concerned, the land would easily be found. When I say "if there were really a disposition on the part of people," I do not intend to convey that there is not a great interest and a growing interest among the agricultural labourers upon this subject, because I think that there is; but it seems to me that what is holding the scheme back from coming into practice is the circumstance that the whole idea is more or less novel, and people are unfamiliar with the facilities which the Building Societies Acts afford to them for the purpose of acquiring land for that purpose. I can see no difference between the case of the working classes in towns acquiring their houses, which they do to a very great extent under the Building Societies Acts, and the agricultural labourers of the better-to-do class acquiring small holdings under the provisions of the Building Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies Acts.

8094. It has been suggested to us that the operation of the law of primogeniture on the decease of an owner of real property intestate, and of the law of settlement, prevents a great deal of land coming into the market which might advantageously be used for the purposes of small holdings; is the law in Scotland the same as it is in England with regard to primogeniture and settlement?—With regard to primogeniture it is the same; with regard to entail and settlement it is materially different. As regards England, I should say that since Lord Cairns' Settled Land Act came into existence the difficulties which arise from settlement or entail are not now considerable; but in Scotland those difficulties are very serious indeed. What I may call the limited owner of land has no power to sell his land without making an application to the court, and in the case of entail, the entail cannot be barred or cut off in the simple way in which it can be now done in England. In my own experience I have known considerable difficulty thrown in the way of small sales by the existence of the law of entail and settlement as it stands in Scotland.

8095. Would you advocate something in the nature of the Settled Land Act, which exists in England, for Scotland?—I should most strongly indeed; and I may say I introduced a Bill in two Sessions in this House for that purpose.

8096. One of the references to this Committee is as to "whether in recent years there has been any diminution in the number of small owners and cultivators of land; I gather from what you say that that is not so in Scotland?—I should not like to express a very positive opinion upon that point. I certainly have known districts in which there used to be allotments, as distinguished from small holdings, and those allotments have gone out of fashion because working people find it more convenient to devote their whole time to earning wages, which they found more profitable; but, on the other hand, among the better class of ploughmen in Scotland there is a distinct demand for garden ground, land for keeping a cow on, and that sort of thing, in addition to the wages which they earn.

8097. I am afraid that I am not very well acquainted with Scotland, but, as I understand it, allotments in Scotland exist only in very small numbers?—That is so.

Chairman—continued.

8098. Is it your opinion that they did once exist, and have diminished, or that they have never taken root in that country at all?—I have no doubt that they did once exist in certain places, and have diminished, but that, in my experience, is confined to certain limited districts. I should doubt very much, so far as my knowledge goes, whether the system ever took root to any considerable extent throughout Scotland.

8099. What does the agricultural labourer do with his spare time; does he desire to spend his time upon the land, or what other resources has he available?—I think that there is a growing disposition on the part of agricultural labourers in Scotland to cultivate a garden, a quarter-of-an-acre allotment, or something of that kind, at the end of the day. But one of the complaints which is at present made by the ploughmen in Scotland is, that their hours are so long, owing to the necessity of attending to the horses after the day's work is over, that they have not time to do anything of the sort, and there is a considerable agitation going on at this moment for shortening the hours for that very purpose.

8100. They would prefer, I suppose, to have gardens immediately round the cottages in which they live?—I think they are unanimous upon that; at least there is a very great body of opinion in favour of that.

8101. Has there been in Scotland of recent years any tendency towards throwing small farms together into large farms?—I think there has, decidedly.

8102. Do you understand by "recent years" as meaning within the last five years, or the last 10 or 15 years, or within that period?—I should say over the last 20 years.

8103. Is it your experience that during the last two or three or four years the tendency has been rather the other way, or do you think that the tendency is still going on?—I do not think that the tendency has been materially altered. I ought to explain that in saying that I am not speaking of the consolidation of small holdings, which (excepting possibly in Forfarshire, and in the case of crofters) have really not existed in Scotland to any material degree. I was talking of the average farm of from 100 to 300 acres; I think the tendency has been to consolidate that class of farm with others. I should like to add that I do not desire to be understood as speaking with any special experience, but merely from general knowledge, upon that point.

8104. Have you seen the proposal contained in Mr. Jesse Collings' Small Holdings Bill?—I have.

8105. Do you think that any machinery similar to that proposed in his Bill would be applicable to Scotland?—I think that such machinery might and probably would be useful in certain districts; but, as I have already said, the chief difficulty in the way of creating small holdings in Scotland at present is, that the people are not familiar with the system, and have not yet seen to the bottom of the transaction; and consequently I doubt very much whether, in the first instance at all events, the passing of such an Act for Scotland would make very much difference.

8106. You do not think that there would be any disposition on the part of the local authority

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Chairman—continued.

to put the Act in force?—I doubt it, until the eagerness of the people to enter into the transaction was more strongly marked than it is at present; and I wish again to say upon that, that I am far from suggesting that there is not a great interest and a growing interest on the part of agricultural labourers just now in the whole subject; but I do not think that we have got to the point at which it can be said that there is a demand to which there is a bar in the shape of absence of legislation.

8107. May I take it that you would like a little more time before you suggested the application of Mr. Jesse Collings's Bill to Scotland?—Hardly, because I can conceive districts of Scotland where there may be a real difficulty, which would immediately arise the moment the demand for land were made, from the absence of compulsory powers; and I should, for that reason, like to see the Bill applied to Scotland also. I only wish to express a doubt whether, in the first instance at all events, the operation of that Bill would be very marked or very extensive.

Mr. *Broadhurst.*

8108. Could you state very shortly the chief points of difference between the Building Societies Act and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876?—The chief point of difference is this: the form of transaction under the Building Societies Act in the case of a building society, strictly so called, is that the society makes an advance to borrowing members upon the security of the land. The society does not as a rule hold the land, except in the shape of a security for the advance which it has made. In the Freehold Land Society, as it is called, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876, it actually takes the conveyance of the land in its own name, and has power to develope the land, to build upon it, and to deal with it with the accumulated funds of the society; then it commonly cuts up the land which it has so dealt with and built upon into plots, which it sells or lets to members according to the demand.

8109. Is the limitation to the extent of its dealings in the case of a provident society the same as in the case of a building society, namely, 500 *l.* stamp value?—I rather think that the 500 *l.* limit as to stamp duty applies to both; but I may say there is a further indirect limitation in the case of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, namely, that the members are not allowed, under the Act, to have an interest exceeding 200 *l.* in amount. I am speaking from recollection, but I think I am accurate.

8110. Could you say generally what area of land you would think would be comprised in the 500 *l.* limit you refer to?—That is a little difficult; it varies, of course, in different localities.

8111. But generally; take Haddingtonshire, for instance?—I should desire to give my answer in this form: not enough to create what, in my opinion, is a sufficient small holding.

8112. Would it comprise 10 acres?—I do not think 10 acres would be enough for a small holding, at all events, for the purposes for which they require them in Scotland.

8113. With the enlargement of that power,

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

with the removal of that limitation as to the stamp value, do you think that those two Acts taken together would give nearly all the facilities required for the acquisition of small holdings?—I think that they do give sufficient facilities at present for the class of transaction which I have in view. Personally I should be against removing the stamp limit, because of the difficulty of preventing people taking advantage of the provisions of this Act, not *bonâ fide*, for the purpose of creating small holdings, but for the purpose of carrying out other conveyancing transactions. When you get up to the 500 *l.* limit I think that you have got as far as it is safe to go.

8114. Is it your opinion that much might be done under these two Acts in the way of the acquisition of small holdings?—That is my opinion.

8115. Is that opinion rather new, generally?—It is distinctly a new opinion. I may say that our experience in Haddingtonshire illustrates what I fancy is the general situation. When my attention was first drawn to the possibility of using the Acts in this way I went down there and made inquiries. I found that we had a very considerable building society; I found that many of the better-to-do agricultural labourers, especially the head servants who have considerable wages, had got considerable accumulations invested in that building society, and I found a general disposition on the part of those who were responsible for the conduct of the business of the society to embark upon this new class of transaction if it could be safely and profitably done, as indeed we all agreed it could be safely and profitably done. I then went round to the agents of owners of some of the land in the neighbourhood and got promises of land for the purpose. We then convened meetings of the agricultural labourers, and we found very considerable interest in the scheme, and the position of things now is, that we have created a society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876, and we have got all our machinery ready, and are only waiting for various people who are willing to become owners of small holdings to take steps to become so, but they want to see their way a little more clearly before they embark the savings of a lifetime in the transaction.

8116. Do you contemplate that the movement you now refer to will enable those connected with it to obtain holdings of from 10 to 20 acres?—Our idea was that the holdings should be a little larger for that part of the country. Our notion was that the holdings should be from 40 to 50 acres, and we calculate that the holdings could be acquired, and acquired upon the terms of the purchase-money being repayable by instalments extending over a pretty long period of years, on the footing that the purchaser would pay nothing more than a fair rent in discharge of the principal and interest. We took the period of the Ashbourne Act, namely, 49 years, as our type of period. Of course the difference between the Ashbourne Act and the Building Societies Act is, that the State under the Ashbourne Act lends the money at a low rate of interest, while under the Building Societies Act they have to

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Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

borrow the money at a considerable rate of interest, and consequently they cannot give such favourable terms as the State gives under the Ashbourne Act. But even making allowance for that, and taking the 49 years period, we calculated that the purchasers of these small holdings would acquire their land in fee-simple at the end of that period, at a rate which would not exceed the fair rent as rents in the district went.

8117. This would be chiefly under the Act of 1876, I understand?—Under that Act and the Building Societies Act of 1874. As I say, it remains to be seen how this is going to work out. All looks well just now, but the matter is only in the stage of becoming practical; it is not yet practised.

8118. I may say this is a new view of these Acts to me; it is a new revelation to me; would this possibility of applying these Acts to the acquisition of small holdings, in your opinion, lessen to some extent the necessity for the Bill of Mr. Jesse Collings?—I should not all like to say that, because it does seem to me that there are parts of Scotland where, as I explained in answer to a question put to me by the Chairman, the indisposition of the people in the district to sell land might make a real difficulty in the way of extending the system of small holdings. Therefore, presuming the Bill of Mr. Collings and Mr. Reid were passed and extended to Scotland, whether that Act would be of great importance in the first instance or not, I think it is extremely desirable that it should be extended to Scotland, for the purpose of getting rid of possible difficulties.

8119. You are aware, I presume, that the Bill of Mr. Jesse Collings contemplates placing the ownership of the land so obtained in the hands of the local authorities for all time?—As I understand the Bill, the proposal under it was that three-fourths of the purchase-money should always remain outstanding, and a perpetual rent-charge be created in respect of it.

8120. Would your opinion rather be in favour of your scheme as proposed in Haddingtonshire; that is, for the cultivators to be absolute owners?—I think that the disposition of the Scotch mind is to get the land unencumbered rather than encumbered, and I think that the fact that, as the instalments are paid each year, the holder of the land subject to the instalments gets nearer and nearer the period when he will own the land in fee, without having anything more to pay, is a considerable inducement to the agricultural labourers in Scotland to come under the voluntary system, as I may call it, rather than under the provisions of the Bill.

8121. Who are the chief landowners in your district?—There are some very large landowners; for instance, Lord Wemyss, Lord Haddington, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and others whom I could name, and also there are some small landowners. We have not had occasion to trouble the representatives of all these gentlemen, but I may say that so far, wherever we have happened to go to them, we have found the greatest willingness to co-operate in the introduction of this system of small holdings; and

Mr. *Broadhurst*—continued.

I have been very much struck with what seems to me the great advance of public opinion on the subject within the last three years.

8122. In Scotland generally, or in your county, is it the habit, to a much greater extent than in England, for farm servants to live upon the farm?—I should say that it is not the habit to a greater extent than in some parts of England, as I understand the English system; but the practice with us undoubtedly is that the servants as a rule do reside on the farm. In Haddingtonshire the cottages in which they live are of a very superior order to anything you are in the habit of seeing in England, and the men are of a class who receive very considerably greater wages than in England.

8123. If that were so it would have a tendency to make the demand less large in volume for holdings, would it not, than it would be in England, where the residential system is not so general?—I may say that I think the demand for small holdings in Scotland would be chiefly taken advantage of by what are called the grieves, that is, the head servants on the farms, who have been better paid, and have accumulated money, and have some practical knowledge of farming.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

8124. So far as Scotland is concerned, I understand you to say that the thing we are considering rather is to be created than is at present existing?—I think that there is a great general interest in it, which has not yet taken a completely practical shape.

8125. I suppose your motive in desiring to extend the system of small holdings is chiefly for the sake of creating a certain class of holders of land?—Yes.

8126. You say that while the demand is not yet great, there is a supply of land if it were wanted?—That is my opinion; but I desire to say that I only speak from practical experience of a few districts; and I can conceive districts where it is otherwise; but, so far as my experience has gone, the difficulty of obtaining the land has not been considerable.

8127. And the demand, because the idea is new, as it were, needs educating?—I think so.

8128. Then there is more wanting than a lack of means; there is at present not a great desire for the article, I understand?—I think there is a desire; but I think that the people have not quite sufficient experience of what they are embarking upon to make them willing to risk the savings of a lifetime, without seeing a little more clearly what is likely to happen to them under the new conditions.

8129. Admitting fully that the thing is good, what is going on is a sort of process of pointing out to them that they ought to go in for small holdings?—I have no doubt that there is such a process going on; but I wish to qualify that by saying that I do not mean to convey by that answer that there is not a considerable demand which is coming from the people themselves, though it is in a more or less inchoate form.

8130. We have heard in England of the large demand, and a difficulty in getting land, owing

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

either to the unwillingness of the owners or agents, or the want of suitable land; I gather that the case in Scotland is exactly the reverse?—I think it is different in this respect, that we have not got to the point of experiencing the difficulty in getting land yet.

8131. Taking the county which you represent, which I know well, in what sort of neighbourhood are you contemplating creating small holdings?—As far as possible, in the neighbourhood of what I may call considerable towns and villages, where there would be a market for garden produce, and eggs, butter, milk, and so on.

8132. Is it essentially a county where there is easy railway communication?—No, I should not say that. The railway communication is rather defective; it is confined to one side of the county. But there are a number of towns of considerable size, such as Haddington, North Berwick, Dunbar, Tranent, and so on; and the opinion of experienced people there is that you could profitably create these small holdings in the neighbourhood of these towns, say within three miles of them.

8133. It is at present essentially a county of large farms, you would say, would you not?—Certainly.

8134. You spoke of well-to-do ploughmen who probably had been for a long time on certain properties; is the idea that they would get holdings where they at present live?—I think that it is extremely desirable that these holdings should be near some market; and I think that the disposition of the men would be to live near where there was a market, assuming that there was not one in the localities where they at present live.

8135. Then as regards the grieves or upper servants of the tenants, do you contemplate their working their own small holding as well as continuing to work for the farmers?—No, that is impossible.

8136. Then as to the land round about the villages, do you contemplate the acquisition of holdings by small tradespeople?—We have not thought that part of the programme out sufficiently to enable me to express an opinion on it just now.

8137. Supposing some of the large farms, such as prevail in Haddingtonshire, were broken up, what would become of the buildings upon them?—Undoubtedly those buildings would be very much too good for small holdings, and not at all suitable. But there is so much land in Haddingtonshire, which would be available for this purpose, that for a long time to come it would not be necessary to break up any considerable number of large farms in order to introduce the system.

8138. Have you considered how buildings would be erected on small holdings?—Yes; we thought that where difficulty arose from the proposed tenant not having enough money to do more through the medium of a building society than borrow so much as would pay for the land, as distinguished from the buildings upon it, we should have had to call in the assistance of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. Under that, the principle of co-operative building would apply, and the company would own a considerable piece of land and would erect buildings upon it, and either let the land so cut up into small holdings with buildings upon at a rent or sell it out and out, the payment being made on the principle of the Building Societies Act in instalments.

8139. Taking the question as a matter of information, and not doubting your statement at all, can you tell me any part of Scotland where allotments have died out?—I can give you an illustration of allotments, as distinguished from small holdings, having died out in the county of Haddingtonshire, where I believe there used to be a number of allotments at the village of Gifford. These allotments have, I believe, now died out.

8140. If people preferred to take labour elsewhere, how do you propose to divert them back again to take these holdings?—These were allotments near a village, and cultivated, not by agricultural labourers, but by small tradesmen; and for some reason or another those allotments have died out.

8141. In the event of powers being given to acquire land for promoting a system of small holdings, do you approve of investing the local authorities with the power?—I know no other authority which it would be possible to give the power to. Under the local authority of course one includes the County Councils, as well as the Town Councils.

8142. And if in any sense the money of the public were pledged, I presume you will admit that the transaction must be made to pay?—Certainly.

8143. You do not, I presume, recommend a grant of public money with the uncertainty of a return for it?—No; I should go as far as this, that I think that the principle adopted in the Ashbourne Act in Ireland might be properly applied in the case of England and Scotland too, on the footing that the State is advancing money which is sufficiently secured; but I think that the limitation which either does or ought to prevail there, that the money is sufficiently secured, is a limitation which must be applied to England and to Scotland also.

8144. Should you favour the extension of the Ashbourne Act to the rest of the United Kingdom?—That is rather a large question; but I should answer it affirmatively to this extent: that it does seem to me that the creation of a more widely diffused ownership of land is a public object and publicly desirable; and, as a means to that end, I should be prepared to see State funds advanced on proper security, for the purpose of accomplishing that object.

8145. Do you see signs of a growing interest in the acquisition of small holdings?—Certainly in Scotland just now.

Sir *Walter Foster*.

8146. Has the agricultural population of your division decreased?—That is a question which it is not very easy to answer. One hears a good deal of talk of the decrease of the agricultural population, but I do not think it has been a decrease in the marked sense in which I understand such a decrease to have taken place in some parts of

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

of England. It is right to say that the agricultural labourer in the part of Scotland with which I am more familiar is a very much more prosperous person than the agricultural labourer, for example, in the south of England. He gets considerably greater wages, and some of his children might go to a Scotch university, and ultimately enter the Church, and others in the long run become schoolmasters or farmers, and so on.

8147. What rate of wages do they get in your parts?—It varies very much, but you may take it that good wages would be, taking everything together, upwards of 40 *l.* a year; 16 *s.* a week with a cottage, and with the cows' grass, and odds and ends of that kind, are by no means uncommon.

8148. In spite of this very comfortable condition of the agricultural labourers, you still notice among them a growing interest in the question of small holdings?—Decidedly.

8149. If their condition were similar to that of the agricultural labourers in England, you would naturally suppose that that desire would be greater?—I think that its greatness arises partly from the fact that the men are as a class very intelligent, and very desirous of making progress. It is possible that the interest in the question of small holdings might for that reason be greater in Scotland than in England, because the people know better what they have to gain by it.

8150. But, apart from that, they are not stimulated in Scotland by the pressure of actual want, as they are in certain parts of England, are they?—I should say not.

8151. And yet these men, with opportunities of saving money and being in a pretty comfortable condition, still find a difficulty in getting land, you say?—I think there is a great desire on the part of the agricultural labourers of Scotland to better their condition. I may say that there has been a considerable controversy this year over the provisions of a Bill which I myself introduced (and about which there is a great deal of difference of expert opinion), for applying the Truck Acts to agricultural labourers, and enabling them to get their wages exclusively paid in money. One of the points that many of them make (of course there is a division of opinion about it) is, that they cannot make out under the existing system, under which they get part of their wages in kind, what wages they are actually receiving; they have taken a number of very intelligent objections to the existing system, as, for instance, that it prevents them from dealing with a co-operative society, where one has to pay cash for what one buys; and, again, that it prevents them from acquiring small holdings, and so on. Whatever may be the merits of the controversy, the matter has been discussed by the agricultural labourers in a spirit of intelligence which would, I think, surprise people who are only familiar with the agricultural labourer in some districts of England.

8152. The facilities for getting on to the land at present are not very great, I understand?—Nobody has applied his mind to the subject sufficiently in Scotland to enable him to give an answer to that question.

8153. Can you give me your own opinion?—My opinion is, that if the people had made up

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

their minds to have small holdings they could have them under the existing law in most districts in Scotland; that is to say, that they would find facilities for purchase given to them; but, as I have said already, it may be that there are other districts in which it would be necessary to have compulsory powers for that purpose.

8154. You think that any Act of Parliament that gave compulsory powers to the local authorities to acquire land for this public purpose would be a useful Act?—I think it is certainly an Act which ought to pass; whether it would be much used in practice in the first instance, I am doubtful.

8155. Any Act that did not contain such compulsory powers would be much less useful, in your opinion?—It would not be able to meet the class of difficulties which I can conceive as existing in some districts.

8156. Are there any miners in your constituency?—Yes, a number.

8157. Do they want small plots of land?—It is difficult to answer that question; I should say they do not. The system varies, but the general system is that the colliery company supply the miners with houses, in which they live, with a small garden attached to them. There is a considerable controversy going on about the tenure on which the miners hold these houses. They object very much to the system which enables them to be turned out of those houses, when they are turned out of the employment of the company at short notice. But I think that the demand, where there is a demand, is only for greater security of tenure, and not for a different class of house.

8158. Which they would obtain under the local authority having power to let the land to them?—Which they might obtain under such a system.

8159. Then with regard to the various schemes that have been put before us; in Mr. Jesse Collings' scheme you are aware, I presume, that it is proposed that a man taking land should pay down one-fourth of the purchase-money; do you think that the payment of one-fourth of the purchase-money would cripple him in his farming operations?—I am disposed to think that it would be a difficulty in the class of transaction which I have in view. It would be necessary not only to acquire the land, but in most cases to have the money for the purpose of putting up buildings and stocking the farm; and our difficulty always was to devise a scheme under which the well-to-do labourer who had saved something should be able to keep his savings altogether for the purpose of stocking his farm, and for putting up small buildings and so on, where necessary, and to call in the law merely for the purpose of enabling him to borrow the purchase-money for the land itself.

8160. Supposing you had a scheme by means of which a man would pay, say, for 49 years, a rent which, at the end of that time, would give him possession of his land minus a quit-rent of, say, 5 *s.* an acre, paid for ever to the local authority; do you think that that would be preferable to the scheme in the Bill?—I should prefer that, speaking personally.

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

8161. On what ground?—Because at the end of the time the owner of the land becomes the owner of the land practically unincumbered, and I think that that is a great inducement; it makes him feel that he is saving money. He has become, through the medium of his ordinary payments, in the position of getting more and more capital at the end of his time.

8162. Would it also give him a greater sense of ownership?—Yes.

8163. And the prospect of leaving his children better off than he was himself?—Yes.

8164. That is, they would have only 5 *s.* an acre to pay instead of three-fourths of the full rent?—Yes.

8165. Do you think that scheme would be better than a system of perpetual leaseholds?—Yes; I may explain that the system of perpetual leaseholds is unknown to us in Scotland. We have what is called the feu system, under which there is a feu duty payable, which may or may not be of a comparatively small amount, but the tenure is freehold subject to the feu duty. We do not, for example, have in ordinary cases such restrictive covenants as you have under the system of leaseholds proper as it prevails in England.

8166. Have you any experience to give us as to whether the productiveness of the land would be increased by the creation of small holdings?—That is impossible to say. Our idea was that a man and his family would be sufficient labour power to cultivate these holdings, and the wife would be able to rear poultry and look after a number of things, which would enable small odds and ends to be realised out of the holding, which could not be realised in the ordinary case of a large farm.

8167. You think that there would therefore probably be greater productiveness in the case of small holdings?—We thought that they could utilise the labour power more completely on small farms in that way than on large.

8168. Under a local authority men holding little plots of land like that would be in a much more independent position than the miners to whom you refer, would they not?—No doubt.

8169. Do you think that that independent position would be conducive to the social well-being of the community?—You will understand that I have no reason for saying that there is any desire on the part of the miners to enter into the condition of owners of allotments of a kind at all different from those which they have at present. It might be so, but I can only say that I have never heard the question discussed or mooted in the way in which questions are generally discussed or mooted when there is much interest taken in them.

8170. Still you have heard complaints about the unfortunate position in which these miners are at present as regards their prospect of losing their homes when they lose their work?—Yes, that is a very common complaint.

8171. That is a very unfortunate condition in which to place any number of men in any community, is it not?—It is not a satisfactory condition, certainly.

8172. Do you think that if an alteration in the law could be devised which would enable the local authorities to do away with that condition, without risk to the public money, the alteration would be conducive to the social well-being of the community?—I think so, and for this reason: the fact that the companies have had to take upon themselves to acquire these plots of land and build upon them shows the necessity for something of the kind, and if the necessity exists when a company has to fulfil it, the necessity exists none the less when the local authority is the party to fulfil it.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

8173. As to this very natural desire on the part of the miners for greater security of tenure in their houses, how does that bear upon the subject of our present inquiry?—I do not know.

8174. Surely the question of the greater security of tenure of their dwellings would turn upon the character of the engagement with the colliery companies; must not the houses and the work go together?—Not necessarily, because you often have a number of pits close together worked by different companies, and although a man may no longer be employed by the one company from whom he may get his house in the first instance, the same house would do for him while he was working at one of other pits in the neighbourhood.

8175. Surely the question of his remaining in his house would be a question of the nature of the arrangement between the men and their employers, would it not?—It would be a question that would depend upon the circumstances of the locality. Of course, if there was only one pit at which employment could be got, a man thrown out of employment from that one pit would have to leave his house, because he could not earn any more wages. But in a populous mining district I can conceive it would be a great advantage to the miner to have security of tenure in the house and garden which he occupied.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8176. Do I rightly understand you to say that under the Building Societies Act the money could not be advanced for the erection of buildings?—I think that would be an inaccurate statement of the law, because the building, when put up, becomes part of the land. What I meant was that a building society cannot, properly speaking, engage in the business of putting up houses upon the land.

8177. But after a tenant has put up a building a building society can advance to its shareholder the full amount of the value of the building put up?—Certainly.

8178. So that it comes to the same thing?—It comes to the same thing, except that I should say there are many cases in which the land and the house upon it do not afford sufficient security for as much as it would be necessary to lay out in the first instance to build the farm buildings upon the land. In the case of the Freehold Land Society the society takes a considerable piece of land, and perhaps buys it on more advantageous terms at wholesale prices; and then cuts it

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

it up and puts buildings upon it, and sells or lets the different plots to its members at a profit.

8179. Are you sure that there is any limitation in the Building Society's Act as to the amount of money that may be advanced?—I have a strong impression that there is no limitation except the indirect one arising from the limit of exemption from stamp duty.

8180. In the "Industrial and Provident Societies Act" is there the same limitation as to the 500 *l.*?—I think that the "Provident Societies Acts" stand in the same position, speaking from recollection. I ought to add that I think in that case that there is a limitation upon the amount of the interest that each member may have in the society to 200 *l.*

8181. Did I rightly understand you to say that there was a limit of 500 *l.* as to the amount which might be advanced?—No, I said that was the limit of exemption from stamp duty.

8182. Under both those Acts the amount of the annual payment which is necessary to cover the repayment of principal and interest is very high, is it not?—It is high, because the money has to be borrowed at a considerable rate of interest from the depositors by the society.

8183. Do you know what the usual percentage is?—It is difficult to say; but my impression is that it is not much less than 4½ per cent.

8184. Do you know that it is usual in building societies to charge 10 per cent. per annum for about 14 years?—I have known such cases.

8185. I believe it is necessary to charge that, is it not, to cover the repayment of principal and interest in the time?—Yes; I misunderstood your question just now. I was speaking of the rate which the society pays to its depositors; when you come to the other amount to which I now understand your question to relate, I know it is in many cases very high.

8186. Do you know that it takes 14 years' payment of 10 *l.* per cent. to repay a building society any advance it makes so as to secure 5 per cent. per annum upon their capital?—It might be so, of course; it depends upon the terms upon which they borrowed their capital.

8187. Do you think that small holdings could be acquired in Haddingtonshire or any other part if tenants had to find so large a sum as 10 per cent. per annum upon the capital?—I think so; because it all depends upon the terms upon which the depositors are willing to lend their money to the society. At present it is very difficult to get more than 4 per cent. for a safe security; and there is a great tendency in the country districts of Scotland to lend money to some society upon the spot where the solvency and character of the directors and the officials are known; and I believe that people are willing to lend at such a rate of interest as 4 and 4½ per cent. to such a society; with that rate of interest I believe it to be possible to facilitate very largely the creation of small holdings; indeed we know from experience of people there; for example, the provision of houses for fishermen has been facilitated to a most enormous extent by the operation of building societies; the town of Cockenzie, for instance, has been almost created through the medium of these societies.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

8188. Looking at the matter from the point of view of the tenant, or the occupier of these small holdings, do you think that he could pay so large an annual per centage as 10 per cent. in the same way that a man could pay 10 per cent. in the case of a house?—No, but the matter was calculated, and it was not estimated that he would be charged anything like 10 per cent.

8189. Over how long a period would the repayments extend?—I have not the figures here; but we took the period of 49 years, and we calculated it upon that. Our proposal was so take a very considerably longer time than the ordinary time in a transaction in a town.

8190. You do not know at what percentage it would come out upon the total?—No, I have not the figures in my recollection.

8191. You said that the chief difficulty in making this Act operative would be that the people had not yet seen to the bottom of it?—Yes.

8192. Is it not always so with a new Act; is it not found that the Act has a great educational value?—I think it is.

8193. Taking the Allotments Act for instance, are you not aware that a great demand for allotments has been created by the Act?—I think that may be so, and I am far from suggesting that the passing of this Act might not be very useful as an educational process. My point was that at present a great deal might be done under the existing law that has not been done owing to the absence of the education, as I may call it, on the part of the people.

8194. In reply to Sir Walter Foster, you said that you thought it would be better for a small holder to acquire the land practically as a freeholder with a nominal quit rent of 5 *s.* an acre. Do you think that it would be just to put the resources of the community at the disposal of a single class like that?—It depends entirely upon two considerations in my view of the question: first of all, whether it is a matter of public interest that such a class of small holders should be created; and secondly, whether you have got adequate security. I think it would be unjust unless under the most exceptional circumstances, and for the very gravest public reasons, to tax the community generally for the benefit of anyone class.

8195. If you place at the disposal of a single class, the resources and the credit of the community (which is equivalent to a cash payment), is that just?—It depends upon these two considerations; first of all, whether the community generally is to be benefited by the enlargement of this class; and, secondly, whether there would be any loss.

8196. If I understand you rightly, the community would only be benefited by the creation of a specially interested class; that is a very limited benefit to the general community, is it not?—In my view it is desirable in the interests of the community that the number of owners of land should be increased; and, holding that to be desirable, I am prepared as an individual to assent to any proposition which would make use of the State credit on proper security for the purpose of carrying that object into effect.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

8197. You say that the disposition of the Scotch mind is towards ownership?—Certainly.

8198. Why is that; is it because the present system is so unsatisfactory; as regards insecurity of tenure?—The leasehold system is little known in Scotland; I am not talking of the short leases of farms, but the long leasehold system; and there is a great love for the fee-simple of land in Scotland.

8199. If the tenant were guaranteed perpetual tenure at a just rent under the local authority, would not that operate as much in favour of thrift and hard work?—I am now only conjecturing; but from my knowledge of the nature of common Scotch transactions and of the Scotch mind, I should say that it would not be so popular as the system under which at the end of a term of years a man would become the unencumbered owner of his land.

8200. But if the State intervenes to make a man unencumbered owner of the land, would that be so equitable as securing for the local authority the unearned increment; that unearned increment under your scheme would go to the tenant himself, would it not?—I do not see why any profit which the tenant makes out of the land should not go to the tenant. I do not understand that under the Bill which was brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, and Mr. Reid last year, the unearned increment in the land would have gone to the local authority. As I understand the Bill (I only speak from my recollection of its provisions), the local authority was to receive the fixed rent-charge as representing the three-fourths which was outstanding.

8201. But the unearned increment is not a value which the tenant creates, but a value which the tenant does not create?—Quite so; but I do not understand that either under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill or under any other scheme which is at present before the country, that is secured for the community.

8202. But if the local authority, as under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, borrows the money at 3 per cent., and lets out the land at 4 per cent., and the principal is gradually redeemed by the local authority, and the tenant comes to be the sole owner, has not the State pledged its credit to the local authority, and the local authority pledged its credit to the tenant for the single benefit of this class?—No doubt, in that case, so far as there is a margin, that margin goes to the local authority, and I suppose that represents the equivalent of the guarantee which the local authority has given to the State for the money which through this medium has been advanced to the tenant.

8203. Supposing that the tenant paid the full 4 per cent., and the local authority paid 3 per cent., the whole value in the long run, under this system which Sir Walter Foster suggested, would go to the tenant himself, would it not?—As I recollect the Bill, the tenant was to pay 1 per cent. more than what the local authority paid for the loan of the money from the State, and the 1 per cent. went to the local authority.

8204. Yes, but it goes to the redemption of the principal?—That may be quite true.

8205. That seems to have escaped you?—I had not that present to my mind at the moment. In that way there is a gradual extinction, I presume, of the principal. There is a complete extinction of it.

8206. So that the result of that complete extinction of the principal, so far as the local authority goes, is to make a present of the freehold to the tenant, who is a party to the bargain?—Under such a scheme I presume that the local authority runs some risk; indeed it must, because it has interposed its guarantee to the State.

8207. You are perhaps aware of the terms of the Allotment Act which was passed the Session before last, in which the right is reserved to the local authority to let out land, of which it would finally become the owner at the end of the 49 years, or whatever the period might be; can you see any injustice in extending that principle to small holdings?—I have not got the details of the Allotments Act present to my mind at this moment: but the local authority there was to become the owner of the land I believe; and it was to let it to an occupier. The principle was the principle of leasing and not selling to the occupier; the local authority was to remain the owner.

8208. So that at the end of 49 years when the payments to the State had ceased, the whole of the rental of the land would be an income for the local authority, and thus the unearned increment would go into the hands of the local authority, and not into the hands of the tenant; is not that so?—The local authority would become in fact the landlord at the end of the term.

8209. Do you not think that that would be more just as between the State and the individual?—It is always desirable, as it seems to me, that the increase in the value of land should, so far as can be fairly managed, go into the pockets of the community rather than into the pockets of individuals; but I do not think you would stimulate the system of small holdings in Scotland at all events to the same extent under that system as if they were enabled to acquire the freehold.

8210. Would you not if you gave perpetuity of tenure?—Under the Allotments Act, as I understand it, the power was simply to make leases; it might be only let for a term, and at the end of that term of course the occupier would be turned out, as he might be by an ordinary landlord.

8211. But if guaranteed perpetuity of tenure were added to the Allotments Act, do you think that that would meet the desires of the Scotch labourers?—I think that the Scotch peasant wants his freehold.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

8212. I understood you to give your assent to the proposal that the tenants should enjoy guaranteed perpetuity tenure under a just rent?—I may have assented to such a proposal, speaking generally, as desirable, but I did not propose any legislation for fixing fair rents.

8213. As I am not familiar with the system in Scotland, may I ask you to explain what guaranteed perpetuity tenure at a just rent exactly means?—In Scotland the prevailing system of tenure

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

tenure of land is what is called feu tenure, that is to say, that the owner of the land is the owner of the freehold, but there is what is called a feudal superior to whom he pays a feu duty, which is hardly represented by the term quit-rent.

8214. What amount would the feu-duty be per acre?—It varies; it is entirely a matter of bargain; a man pays it very often in addition to the price; he pays a lump sum and a feu-duty.

8215. Would you tell me a liltle more with regard to the facility in Scotland for borrowing money?—Under the Building Society Acts a man can borrow in very much the same way as in England.

8216. But take the case of a tenant having an opportunity of acquiring 25 acres, how would he set to work to borrow the money to stock his farm if he should not have the money?—Do you mean through the medium of a building society?

8217. No, I mean otherwise than through the medium of a building society?—He would have to go in the ordinary way and borrow money upon mortgages, as I presume any other person would.

8218. What security would he give?—It would depend upon what he had to give; that was one difficulty we proposed to get rid of by the medium of these building societies.

8219. You have given attention to the subject, and I should like to know how you would recommend anyone who was anxious to acquire land and had an opportunity of acquiring land, but had not the money to stock it with, to get money to stock it with?—I should recommend him to go to a building society and buy the land, and so keep as far as possible the balance of his savings for the purpose of stocking it. The class of people we contemplate are the class of persons who have saved a certain amount of money (and there are such in Scotland), and such a person would borrow the great bulk of his purchase money from a building society, and he would use his savings for the purpose of stocking the land.

8220. Supposing that he is not a member of a building society, and supposing that there is an objection to his becoming a member of a building society, what rate of interest would he have to pay if he got the money through a local lawyer?—Supposing he would have to borrow money upon the security of his holding, if he borrowed three-fourths of the purchase money, he would have to pay probably at least 4½ per cent. or possibly 5 per cent. The current rate of interest I may explain in Scotland is 3½ per cent.

8221. But the money-lender would require some security, would he not?—Certainly; for an advance of so large a portion of the purchase money; probably the man would have to pay 4½ or 5 per cent.

8222. Would that cover all his expenses?—It would still leave a margin for the price of the land to be provided for.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8223. I think you say that your experience is that in these hard times landlords are ready

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

enough to sell to small holders or anybody else?—I think so.

8224. Do you think that they have got completely over all the difficulties about game and so on in those parts?—I would not say completely, but to a very much greater extent than they had a few years ago.

8225. Is that so in Perthshire as much as in East Lothian?—I should not like to say it was universal as to either Perthshire or East Lothian, but certainly in a large part of both counties it is practically so.

8226. As regards the system of borrowing money under the Building Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, I understand you to say that in the case of borrowing shares the whole money is advanced for the purchase?—They do not generally advance the whole of the purchase money; there is a small margin.

8227. But is there only a small margin as regards the amount of purchase money, or is it the case that most of the men as shareholders have already contributed something so as to give an additional security?—No; the theory is that he is a shareholder who has not paid for his share, and his share is advanced by way of anticipation. Then he pays off the advance by means of instalments which he would have as a shareholder to pay in respect of this share, and the result is that at the end of the period, whereas he would if he had not borrowed the money be a fully paid-up shareholder, yet as a matter of fact he is a shareholder the amount of whose advance is paid off.

8228. Does it not generally happen that a man, on immediately becoming a shareholder, cannot get an advance, and that he has to wait his turn, so that by the time that his turn comes, he would have paid something upon the shares that would give an additional security?—It entirely depends upon the proportion of the investing members to the borrowing members. As a matter of fact, in the case of some building societies which I have in view, the number of investing members is large, and there is no difficulty in that respect.

8229. Is that so in the case of most building societies?—I should not like to say as to that; I believe that there are a great many building societies in England where it is quite the other way.

8230. With regard to the superior agricultural labourers, to whom you referred, who have saved a little money, and who would be ready to stock farms if they could get over the novelty of the idea, and the fear of losing their money, do you think that usually their desire would be to buy, or to rent and stock a farm?—I think that they would prefer to buy, but I think there are many who would rent if they could not buy.

8231. I think you expressed the view that in order to cultivate properly a small farm, it should not be less than 40 or 50 acres; is not the sum of money necessary to purchase so considerable an area of land so large that it would probably be beyond the means of most agricultural labourers?—It is no doubt considerable. That is one of the difficulties that has always to be considered in the way of such a scheme; that you

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

want a considerable area in order to do the thing profitably; at all events, in many districts, the purchase money for that land is considerable. But we found in working out the figures that it was practicable; at any rate, we thought so.

8232. We have been told by a good many witnesses that the demand is really for small farms rather than for small ownerships; is not that so?—I think that is so, meaning by small farms something of the size which I have spoken of.

8233. Supposing that the labourers who want to become farmers are not possessed of the means for buying and stocking farms, and the landlord is willing to let small farms, but is deferred by the difficulty in regard to buildings, do you think that any plan could be devised by which the land being let on a lease the farmer should undertake to supply his own buildings upon terms of being recouped at the end of his lease, and that he should obtain the means of putting up the buildings through the building society system to which you have referred?—I doubt whether any satisfactory means could be adopted of carrying out that proposal.

8234. If the landlords and the tenants were both willing to adopt a system of that kind, do you think that the Building Societies Acts would be applicable?—The difficulty was one which we propose to get over through the medium of the other Act to which I referred, viz., the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. There, you see, a number of people come together and buy a biggish piece of land at wholesale prices, and they have funds in their hands (the funds of the investors), and with those they develop the land and cut it up into small holdings and put buildings upon it; they are the landlords, and they either let or sell out and out the land ready supplied with buildings, and in such a case of course a small farmer has to pay off his instalments or pay his rent as the case may be, but he has his savings reserved to him to stock the farm with.

8235. You said that you thought it might be possible to enable small men to buy farms without paying more for rent and sinking fund combined than the present rent of the land: but, on the other hand, you told us that such a man would have to pay to his society 4½ or 5 per cent. interest, plus a certain sinking fund, whatever that may be, so that it would come to at least 6 per cent. If they had to buy land at such a rate paying this 6 per cent. upon the money, would it not be more than the rent they have to pay at present?—It depends upon the period of years that you take. If you take 49 years, I think you would find it works out as I have said. Of course the difficulty in the case of ordinary building societies is that the term is very short; the amount is repayable in 14 years very often, or even in 10 years sometimes.

8236. Taking your statement to be that under the circumstances in which they can borrow money from one of the societies they must pay for interest upon the loan not less than 4½ or 5 per cent., whatever the time may be you must add something for sinking fund; does not that necessarily imply that the total payable for interest and sinking fund could hardly be less than 6 per cent., and, if so, is not that more than the rent of the land?—I doubt whether it is more than the rent of the land.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

8237. How many years' purchase of the real present rents do you think that land generally fetches in Scotland now?—I should say 25 to 30 years' purchase is very common.

8238. Does not 30 years' purchase mean a little more than 3 per cent., whereas in this case the man has to pay not less than 6 per cent.?—It certainly does seem so in that case. But you observe that, taking 49 years as the period of repayment, and taking the purchase-money and spreading it over that period, you get a very great reduction on the amount of the annual instalment.

8239. I think you said that there had not been much diminution in the number of small cultivators in East Lothian; perhaps that was because there have been no small cultivators in East Lothian to diminish, but in Perthshire has there not been a considerable diminution of small cultivators?—I am unable to say. There certainly has been a great disappearance of crofters, but that is a phenomenon which for the last 50 years, at any rate, or perhaps 100 years, has been confined to the Highland districts. In the Lowland districts one constantly sees traces; indeed, I know no part of the Ochil Hills where you do not see traces of small holdings where there have been two or three little fields and small farm buildings, but those are mostly the marks of holdings which disappeared about 1745, after the period of the Highland clearances of that time; that is to say, a very long time ago.

8240. Are you inclined to think that in Perthshire and in Forfarshire there has not been a disappearance of crofters using the term in its Lowland sense in more recent years than that?—It is quite true that they are fewer than they were; the tendency is for these people to disappear, but what the causes are, or what the period is over which this disappearance has taken place, I am not in a position to say.

8241. Do you know the Murthly property, or that part of Perthshire, at all?—Only by reputation.

8242. I understand you to express your personal opinion to be that even up to the present time there is a disposition to throw what we should call in Scotland small farms, that is farms from 100 to 300 acres, into large; is it not the case that a great many large farmers have gone, and on the other hand the landlords who have small farms have much less difficulty in letting them?—I think that the tendency in Scotland has been to enlarge farms of late years; it may be that just lately it has been easier to let small farms. I do not feel in a position to express a valuable opinion upon that subject.

8243. Is it not the common belief throughout the country that it is much more easy to let a small farm than a large farm at this moment?—I think it may be just at this moment.

8244. Do you think that a landlord having small farms, and having buildings upon them, would be at all likely under those circumstances to knock down the buildings and throw them into large

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

large farms?—Certainly; he would not knock down any buildings unless he was pretty sure of getting back the amount in the shape of increased rent or some other means.

8245. You have spoken of the disappearance of allotments in some places in Scotland; do you mean allotments, strictly so called, or do you refer to small holdings of a somewhat larger character than the ordinary English quarter of an acre allotment?—I mean the real small quarter of an acre allotments. Those are the only cases I have known disappear to any extent. I mean small pieces of land in the neighbourhood of villages; the village of Gifford, to which I referred, is an illustration of that.

8246. Were those old village holdings?—Yes; they were village holdings of some standing.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

8247. You were questioned just now with regard to unearned increment; what do you understand by the term „unearned increment"?—It is a little difficult to answer that question. I mean the general increase in the value of the land which is not due to the work which has been done upon it by the occupier or cultivator, but which is due to some special rise in the value of kind of property to which it belongs.

8248. That special rise is the result of labour, is it not?—Not necessarily; land may go up in price to an extraordinary degree.

Chairman.

8249. In the case of the feu, I understand that it is an annual payment, subject to which the tenant of the land is practically a freeholder?—He is the freeholder.

Chairman—continued.

8250. Supposing that he does not pay the feu duty, what remedy has the superior?—He has certain legal remedies of a somewhat cumbrous kind by which he can turn the man out; but it is always in the power of the owner who pays the feu duty to get rid of the consequences of those remedies by even at the last moment, paying up the amount of his arrears.

8251. Has there been any feeling in Scotland at all against the payment of the feu duty?—I should say not.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8252. The feu is a comparatively insignificant amount in regard to the value of the property, is it not?—Very often.

8253. Is it not so generally?—I would not say generally; sometimes the feu duty is the full value.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8254. Are not the modern feus enormously high, 30 *l.* or 40 *l.* an acre?—Very often that is so in the neighbourhood of a town.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

8255. Is it not the common law in Scotland that, if the feu duty is two years in arrear, the superior can take proceedings?—That is the common law.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

8256. Is the feu duty a fourth of the value, or is there any proportion fixed?—No; it is a matter of contract.

8257. It is not anything like the payment of a fourth, as suggested in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—No; it is purely a matter of contract.

Mr. JOHN MACGILCHRIST ROSS, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

8258. I BELIEVE you farm as tenant about 300 acres near Alness, in Ross-shire?—Yes.

8259. You also carry on a distillery at Teaninich?—Yes, in the same parish.

8260. You are a justice of the peace for Rossshire, I believe?—Yes.

8261. You have for some time, I believe, taken a considerable interest in the crofters' question?—Yes.

8262. You are also a member of the Council of the Land Nationalisation Society?—Yes.

8263. I believe you have prepared a scheme for the amendment of the land laws in the Highlands?—I have here a scheme which was prepared by me; I would not take upon myself to draft a Bill to be introduced into the House of Commons, but I was advised by my friends to put it in the form of a Bill for the sake of convenience, so that the different parts might be compared together; and I have brought a few copies here which I can distribute to honourable Members, if they desire to see it.

8264. I think that you originally came from Sutherlandshire?—I spent my youth in Sutherlandshire.

8265. With regard to your first undertakings in the farming line, you took some land from your father, I understand?—Yes; being the eldest son I was allowed a sub-lease. I may say that sub-letting is prohibited, but I believe that it is the law of Scotland that the eldest son may take a sub-set; and I took advantage of that, and took a sub-set of part of my father's farm, being his eldest son and heir.

Chairman—continued.

8266. You built your own house upon that land, I understand?—Yes; I may mention that it was quite customary at that time for people to build houses in that way upon that estate and upon other estates in the Highlands; and it was understood that if they built their houses they had those houses during their lifetime; but they paid to the landlord so that he should still have his claim as superior, to what was a small quit rent. I mention that lest it should be supposed that I had done an injudicious thing in building that house, having no title; but I only did what was customary on that property.

8267. Was that house on the property of Sir Charles Ross?—Yes; of which I had a sub-set.

8268. I believe you have a complaint against the present Lady Ross, because she turned you out without compensation?—She gave me no compensation; she said she could get 16 *l.* a year rent for the house from other people, and that by

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Chairman—continued.

law the house was hers, so then I just turned my back and left it in disgust.

8269. Was the house taken with a view to consolidating your farm with another one?—It was a sub-set that I had; and after the lease was out my brother took the farm as a whole; so that this house was not required for any sub-set. In the farm as originally held by my father, this house was not required; and now this house is let to strangers.

8270. Your experience, then, is chiefly in connection with Sutherlandshire and with Ross?—Yes, and partly Inverness-shire.

8271. I am afraid that we are not able to go into the crofter question here at all; we must confine ourselves to the question of small holdings on the low-lying country in both the Lowlands and the Highlands?—There are low-lying parts of the Highlands which are just as low-lying as any parts of the Lowlands. The East Ross farming is of the very best description; and some of the very largest farms in Scotland are found there. Those in the plain of East Ross are as large as any.

8272. Have those always been large farms?—For a very long time. There is no man living who can remember when some of the best land in East Ross was not in large farms.

8273. Has there been, in recent years, any consolidation of small farms into large farms?—There has been a continual process of consolidation going on.

8274. During your recollection?—Yes; from what I hear from other people who were old in my youth, there has been a continual process of consolidation going on.

8275. What becomes of the buildings on small farms when they are consolidated into large farms?—They are mostly levelled. I estimate that farm buildings do not last more than 30 years without very extensive repairs.

8276. What are the reasons of consolidation?—The reasons of consolidation are both natural and artificial. It would take me a pretty long time if you want me to enter into that subject fully, but I will state it as shortly as I can. In the first place, fewer buildings are required on large farms; tenants, when they have no right to claim anything for their permanent improvements, naturally will not build; and then the landlord, having to build, takes into his consideration the fact that the smaller the expense that he lays out upon buildings the better; and he therefore aims at consolidation.

8277. Are there any causes existing now for consolidating farms which were not existing in former times, or are there any causes which were existing then which are not existing now for consolidation?—Up till 10 or 12 years ago, when the great agricultural depression set in, as I have said already, the process of consolidation was going on continuously. Notwithstanding the very great demand for small farms landlords would consolidate whenever they got an opportunity of consolidating. But since the great agricultural depression set in, landlords find that tenants are not so easily got for large holdings, and therefore the process of consolidation has

Chairman—continued.

stopped. But notwithstanding all this, there is still as great a demand as ever for small holdings.

8278. Then you think that of recent years the process of consolidating small farms into large ones has ceased?—It has ceased.

8279. The process is now reversed, is it?—I should not say that it is reversed, for this reason, that there will be additional expenses incurred in breaking up the large farms. It is better for the landlord to keep up the buildings on one large farm than on a number of small ones. The landlords, as well as tenants, are suffering from the great depreciation; they naturally lay out as little money as they can upon buildings, and matters are left as much as possible in *statu quo*.

8280. In the neighbourhood of Alness are there any small ownerships now?—There are no small ownerships whatever; but I could speak about certain landlords in my neighbourhood who are what are called good landlords, who own some of the glens. The generality of landlords would have consolidated them either into large sheep farms or sporting preserves, but I can point to two landlords in my neighbourhood who have not done so; and I can give a most favourable account of the conditions of the small holders in those glens.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

8281. Were those small holdings recently created?—Yes; in one place, Strathrusdale; they were formed by Sir Alexander Matheson when he came home.

8282. Those were not hereditary small holdings, were they?—Some of them were hereditary, but not those at Strathrusdale. When Sir Alexander Matheson of Strathrusdale came home I believe it was a sheep farm; and he has out of generosity, or possibly to gain political and social influence (I do not know how that may be), formed it into small holdings.

8283–4. I want you to distinguish between small holdings which existed from time immemorial and those recently formed?—The other two glens have from time immemorial been small holdings, and have remained so. In the other glen the small holdings were created out of a large sheep farm by Sir Alexander Matheson, and Strathrusdale is looked upon as the model system in the Highlands, that is, admitting the present system of landlordism. The tenants are very regular in paying their rents. The rents are from 20 *l.* to 50 *l.*; there are about a dozen tenants altogether. They have common hill pasture. This case may be referred to as a typical case of how a glen might be repeopled.

Chairman.

8285. That is a case in which a large sheep farm has been broken up into small holdings, as I understand?—Yes; that is one case that I know of.

8286. Do you know whether financially that has been a success to Sir Alexander Matheson and his successors?—I do not think it has.

8287. You think that the land would have paid him a better price as a large sheep farm?—Very decidedly.

8288. Did

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Chairman—continued.

8288. Did he put buildings up upon the small holdings?—He did.

8289. Does he charge interest upon the expenditure on those buildings?—I am not aware; I do not think he does.

8290. What sized holdings are those?—If you will excuse me, in answering that question, in speaking of the Highlands, I should very much rather answer it with regard to the rent than with regard to the size in acres; because there is often common pasture attached, which enhances the value very much.

8291. What is the average rent?—From 20 *l.* to 50 *l.*

8292. Can you give any indication of the size of the holding; I suppose it depends upon the quality of the land?—It depends upon the land and upon the pasture. These holdings are let in this way: so much arable land, and so much outrun.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8293. Those would be cases quite in the Highlands?—Yes.

Chairman.

8294. Whereabouts is this Strathrusdale Estate?—Above Ardross Castle. The other two glens that I referred to belong to Mr. Ferguson, of Novar. To my knowledge, Mr. Ferguson, of Novar, was urged when he came into this property to turn out those tenants, and to form these two glens into a sporting preserve; but he very patriotically refused to do so.

8295. What is the character of the land in these glens?—The land is suited for oats and for two-years grass; it scarcely grows barley; it certainly does not grow wheat, and it is not well adapted for barley. It is best adapted for the ordinary five-course rotations; that is, first, turnips or potatoes, then oats, then two-years grasses, and then oats.

8296. Do the people who inhabit these holdings make their living entirely out of the land?—Entirely, but they rely a great deal upon the privilege of outrun. I believe that these glens would be useless without the outrun, because they keep their sheep on the outrun. The holdings would not pay if it were not for the outrun.

8297. Where is the common land on which they feed their sheep?—Just on the hills around.

8298. What do they do in winter for pasturage for their sheep?—The sheep are out there mostly in the winter: they pasture upon the arable land also.

8299. Do they keep any cows upon those holdings?—They do keep cows, and that would be one of the very best features of creating these small holdings; because I as a large farmer can testify, there is a very great difficulty in getting young stock. We large farmers do not care about breeding, except to a limited extent, and our supply of young stock is got from the small holders in the glens. For that reason in itself, I should like to see the system of small holdings extended. They keep very good cows on those holdings, and, perhaps, I may mention that they take very great care in the selection of bulls, and a very good class of stock is reared there. The calves are bought by myself and other large farmers, who feed them and send them to the London market, and get as high a price as for

Chairman—continued.

Aberdeenshire stock; several shillings per hundredweight more than is got for cattle brought from Canada.

8300. So far you have been speaking of the small holders up in these glens?—Yes.

8301. With regard to the district immediately around Alness, are there any small holders there?—Very few; they are almost all large farmers. There are a few places which are not adapted to be consolidated into large farms, where, for instance, it is bad land that a large farmer would not care to occupy. Those lands are let in small holdings and readily fetch a tenant.

8302. Would that be just outside the town?—Yes, just outside the town; there is land there that can be readily let as small holdings, which I or other large farmers would not like to take.

8303. Because it is indifferent land?—Because it is indifferent land.

8304. Who are those lots taken by?—They are taken readily; not by labourers exactly, but there is a class of people who come into the country who make money by cattle dealing. I understand that this Committee is a Committee inquiring into small holdings, and not into allotments; and, therefore, I confine my remarks to holdings of from 10 *l.* up to 50 *l.*

8305. Do the men who take these holdings occupy themselves in other pursuits, or do they give themselves up entirely to tilling these small plots?—They may do an occasional job of carting and that kind of thing, but otherwise they are entirely occupied on their holdings.

8306. They are not tradesmen in the town, I understand?—No. A tradesman may occasionally, after he retires, take a small holding. They are filled up from all classes.

8307. Are you acquainted with the provisions of Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—I had the pleasure of having a little conversation with him last evening, and he explained the Bill generally; but I did not see the Bill itself.

8308. You understand, I may take it, what this proposal is?—I understand that one feature of his proposal is that the land is to be bought, in the first instance, by the local authority, and a fourth part of the purchase-money is to be paid down before a person can be accepted as a tenant.

8309. In Alness do you think that there would be any value in having machinery of that kind?—In the brief of my evidence, which is before you, I say that there is another system that is very much preferable. However, I can briefly answer the question in this way: I do not think that it would be largely availed of, because I think upon the whole the small people do not aim at being proprietors so much as getting leases.

8310. But under the proposal of Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill the small people would not become proprietors; they would be subject to a perpetual quit-rent; and they would never be able to become the owners of the land?—But then they have fixity of tenure. They are virtually proprietors, subject to a quit-rent, which is a moderate quit-rent, inasmuch as they have paid a certain sum down.

8311. Why do you not think that that would be availed of?—I have not studied it; but I do not think that it would be largely availed of.

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Chairman—continued.

8312. Why not?—I think that those who wish to become small holders would prefer simply to take leases and to get the buildings erected or put in order for them by the landowners.

8313. You think that the difficulty would be as regards the small man putting up the buildings?—Yes. May I ask, are they allowed under the Bill full valuation for those buildings if they choose to quit the holdings?

8314. As I understand the Bill, they would be entitled to sell their interest for whatever price they could get to anyone that they chose?—May I ask whether they could bond their interest to raise money?

8315. No, they would not be able to mortgage at all, except as regards the fourth part, which they would pay as deposit?—Then I do not think that it would be largely taken advantage of; I think they would prefer the other system.

8316. What do you mean by the other system?—The present feu system of letting on a 19 years' lease, the landlord to put all the buildings in order at the beginning, and the tenant to keep them in order.

8317. Do you think that the local authority would be the proper people to become the landlords, and to feu the land in the way you have described?—Yes, under this scheme of ours, to which I have referred, it would; I may say it is a scheme quite of a different nature from that of Mr. Jesse Collings' scheme.

8318. Do you have many applications to you for land?—Yes, for potatoes, to my loss; I must give land for that purpose; I have no choice; I will not get a labourer unless I give the potato land; it is part of the contract.

8319. Do the men employ themselves upon this potato land after their working hours?—Yes.

8320. You say you cannot get labourers to work for you unless you give them a small portion of land?—Quite so; that is to say, the use of the land for one year while it is under fallow; that is every fifth year.

8321. Do these men keep pigs?—They do keep pigs to their great profit. But the great hindrance to keeping pigs in villages is this: that when the houses are crowded together there are bad smells, and so on.

8322. Do they keep the pigs adjoining their own cottages?—Yes; but if they had little allotments connected with their houses the pigs could be removed, so that they would not be a nuisance to their neighbours.

8323. Are there any allotments at Alness?—The present landlord of the property which I farm has created a considerable number of these allotments, and he gets very good rents for them. Including the site of the house, he gets 5 *l.* and 6 *l.* an acre; those little allotments are very much appreciated.

8324. You mean allotments let with the house?—Yes; including the site of the house, for half an acre the rent would be about 2 *l.* to 3 *l.*, and it is paid very punctually; the houses are their own; and these people keep pigs, and get a good deal of their living out of that; it keeps down the poor rate. In our parish the poor people are considered to be very well off; and it is largely due to these little allotments. The poor people keep these pigs, and get draff from my distillery and others, and go out as labourers, and manage to make a little out of it.

Chairman—continued.

8325. You think that there is a considerable demand among the humbler classes for the occupation of land as allotments?—Yes; and we advocate the compulsory acquiring of land for allotments (not small holdings) in the meantime.

8326. Have you any observations to make with regard to the economy of large as against small farms?—Do you mean economy to the landlord?

8327. Yes?—There is one thing which I do not think has quite come out yet in any of this evidence. A very great deal of land in this country is bonded; and these bonds are negotiated as between the mortgagor and the landlord through a class of lawyers who act for both parties. Those lawyers see at the time of arranging the bonds that as much as possible of the land on which the money is advanced is in large holdings, for the sake of security; because it is considered that there is more security in getting in the rent in one lump sum from a large farmer than in getting the rents from a number of small ones.

8328. You think that that tends to keep the farms large?—I do; and then, as I have said already, fewer buildings are required.

8329. I will just ask you if you would explain to the Committee the principles which are embodied in your scheme, of which you have a copy before you, and which we have not yet had an opportunity of studying; does that in any way provide for small holdings?—It does to this extent; so far as allotments are concerned, it makes it compulsory upon landlords to sell to local bodies where the land is required for allotments; but as regards small holdings it is left permissive in this Bill. This Bill is rather for the municipalisation of land than the nationalisation of land.

8330. I understand you do give the power to the local authority to agree to purchase the land for these purposes?—Yes.

8331. Do you in your scheme limit the size of the holding?—I limit the rent (which is to be a fair rent) to 50 *l.*

8332. How do you provide for the payment by the tenant to the local authority?—We divide the value of the land and what is on it into two separate parts, and look upon them as essentially different in nature. We look upon the *solum* value as one thing, to be held in perpetuity by the local authority, and the natural increment goes into the funds in perpetuity of the local authority, or it may be required for national purposes. In order to do this it is necessary to have a land court to distinguish between the two. On the other hand, as regards the other part, which is now looked upon as heritage and the property of the landlord, the law holding that what is attached to the land becomes part of the land, we want to do away with that principle, which is a most iniquitous principle; we want to establish the principle that a man has quite as much right to everything he puts upon the land, and as much right to any improvements he makes,

as

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Chairman—continued.

as he has to any moveable stock upon it. That is a secondary matter upon which money can be raised in the best way the tenant can through Land Loan Companies or otherwise. But with respect to the *solum*, the money for that is to be raised by the local authority, it is to be in perpetuity the property of the local authority.

8333. Then the land will always remain the property of the local authority?—The *solum* will remain the property of the local authority subject to a rent to be paid by the tenant, and the local authority has a first bond and security over all the property which the tenant has upon that land.

8334. How is the rent to be fixed?—By this Land Court.

8335. Not by agreement?—No.

8336. Is it to be revised from time to time?—Every seven years.

8337. Then, in fact, you apply very much the Irish Land Act of 1881 to Scotland?—No, my scheme is quite different from that.

8338. I mean in respect of setting up a court for the purpose of fixing rent?—Yes.

8339. In that respect you would seek to apply the provisions of the Irish Land Act to Scotland?—To some extent, but if the land was taken over from the landlord, we look upon it from the landlord's point of view as well as from the point of view of the people. My own opinion is, that the landlord by recent legislation has been pretty severely punished by being cabined and confined. I think the proper thing in justice to the landlord is to buy him out-and-out and not create more restrictions.

8340. How is the price which the local authority is to pay to the landlord to be fixed?—By a Land Court to be established. There is a provision in my Bill for the present Land Court that we have for fixing rents to be made available for that purpose.

8341. Then you are not a believer in peasant proprietorship in the sense of the men being the actual owners of the soil?—We are not, for this reason, that I believe that should you create peasant proprietorships to-day, in ten years the land would be consolidated again, because men marry and get families, and they must divide their means, and they sell, and the land becomes consolidated. It is more easily managed in large holdings and large properties than in small ones, and it is my experience that years ago there were many more small proprietors in the country than there are now, and they are gradually being extinguished. They sell the land, and their properties are consolidated.

8342. Under your scheme, how would the local authority pay the landlord from whom they purchased?—With money borrowed from the Treasury on the security of the land. I put in this Bill, which was drafted before the Ashbourne Act passed, and I provided that the parish rates should go for security; but since I have seen how liberally the Government gives money to Ireland on the security of the land without asking any security of the rates, I do not see why we in the Highlands should not get quite as much as the Irish have already got; and I knocked that out.

Chairman—continued.

8343. In your Bill I suppose you insert some safeguards against the demesne and curtilage of the landlord's house being taken for this purpose?—Surely; and though in this agitation the prevailing opinion is that the deer forests should be abolished altogether, I never acquiesced in that. I always thought that deer foresting to a limited extent should be allowed in the Highlands. There is always sport in the Highlands, and I do not see why it should be prohibited now, provided that all the land that is suitable for the people should be given to the people for the people to live on. I do not at all see why deer forests should be abolished as proposed.

8344. Your scheme would naturally apply to land in the immediate neighbourhood of small towns and villages?—Yes.

8345. And not to land in secluded spots where deer forests are generally to be found?—No, not quite so, because as to deer forests and sheep farms, there are certain parts of the Highlands that have been depopulated. There are many pretty glens in the Highlands which should be re-peopled. There are a few deer forests parts of which I think should be taken up, and a great deal of land which is just now under large sheep farms should be re-peopled. I know many places where new townships should be established, and I made provision in the Bill that the people of adjacent townships might combine and apply for certain lands lying waste, and go to the Land Court, providing the Land Court as a go-between between the landlord and the local authorities. Now, in order to take up land which is at present lying waste, and which is suitable for new townships, it would scarcely do to leave that to one township, and it is preferred that several townships should join together, and that they should go to the Land Court, and that the Land Court should make a survey, see what land is required chiefly in large sheep farms, and that new townships should be created. The agitation in the Highlands will never be satisfied until certain parts which are depopulated are again repeopled.

8346. That is going rather into the crofter question?—Yes.

8347. With regard to corporations being the owners of the land, have you any experience of the method in which they manage their estates?—Yes, I think they are very bad landlords; they do not want to give the money; they do not want to give the town funds for buildings, and they usually throw the expense of erecting buildings and keeping them in repair upon tenants.

8348. Do they let to the highest bidder generally?—I believe they are bound to do so by their charters.

8349. Do you think that would be an objection to Mr. Collings' Bill that the local authority might follow in the steps of a corporation, and let to the highest bidder?—I think it would be a very bad way indeed of doing it. I think that the tenants should be selected, and I think that if you get good local authorities, men who wish to do their duty, you will find that in most parochial boards, as I know, they want to do justly with regard to their present duties, and

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Chairman—continued.

I believe that should additional duties devolve upon them of managing the land they would choose proper tenants, and would see that the land that was let to the tenants was properly cultivated, otherwise they would come down upon them.

8350. I think in what you say you have in mind certain burghs in your county?—Yes.

8351. Who are the governing bodies of those burghs; are they popularly elected?—No, the town councils. They are elected under the Scotch Municipal Acts.

8352. What burghs are they?—I should say the burgh of Tain and the burgh of Fortrose. The burgh of Fortrose has this peculiarity that there have been real allotments connected with that burgh for a very long time, that is on the land-rig system, in the neighbourhood of the town. These rigs are let, and the people of the burgh take them up and farm them, and they appear to get on very well.

8353. You do not think that these burghs are good landlords?—I do not think they are.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

8354. You said truly enough that fewer buildings are erected on the larger farms. How do you contemplate buildings being erected on small farms where they do not exist at present; who has to pay for them?—The landlord has to pay for them. When the demand for land was very keen, when a landlord could readily let land, and throw it upon small holders, they would take the chance of erecting buildings, because there was such a demand for land at one time that people took land on any terms; but now a small holding cannot be let without the landlord putting up the buildings because there is not so much demand now.

8355. It would put the landlord to considerable expense to multiply buildings for the small holdings?—Yes.

8356. In the case of the Model Glen you mentioned, you said it had not been a financial success?—Not a financial success, that is to say, more money would have been got by the proprietor if it had been let as one sheep farm.

8357. Then on what basis do you contemplate there could be any great extension of a system that does not pay. You say in this exceptionally good case, this Model Glen, the transaction did not pay. How could there be any extension of a system that does not pay?—I freely admit that there cannot, because being a member of this Nationalisation Society, I think the present system is altogether wrong and tends to consolidation, and we want a change of the Land Laws. We say that the present system favours consolidation. We look in vain for the extension of small holdings as a financial success.

8358. You said the people would prefer to be occupiers, having the buildings put up by the landlords. How is that to be done if the transaction does not pay?—It cannot be done and it will not be done.

8359. If such a rent was exacted as would make the transaction pay, I take it there would not be great demand for the holdings?—I think so. I think that in any case and in any circumstances small holdings will be taken up, but then the question comes to be this from the landlord's point of view, the landlord prefers not to create such small holdings, suiting his own interest simply, but there are cases in which a landlord wishes to be popular, and perhaps out of pure benevolence, and he may consider it his duty to keep the land as much occupied by people as possible and that he ought not to let it waste. I consider that land under very large holdings is waste quite as much as under sheep and deer, because people are practically mere manufacturing machines.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

8360. The people who are enjoying the luxury of providing these buildings which do not pay must be landlords deriving incomes from elsewhere?—Yes, it is well known that many landlords at the present time lay out more on their properties than they get in rent.

8361. Then they must be persons deriving an income from elsewhere?—Certainly.

8362. That does not apply to the case of a landlord who has nothing but a property in that sort of locality?—The landlords who have nothing but a property to live on are simply dying out altogether.

3863. How does bad land which, as you say, large farmers would not look at, answer for small holdings?—Such is the demand for small holdings that they will be taken up.

8364. Whether the people make a living out of them or not?—They do to a certain extent make a living out of them; they cultivate them themselves, and they rear pigs, and do many things that a big farmer would not choose to do.

8365. And they eke out their living by other occupations?—Yes.

8366. I understand there is a great deal of distress among such persons at present?—Among crofters on the west coast.

8367. But do persons who occupy such holdings really make it pay with the help of other occupations?—They do; I am very sorry to say from personal experience that these people have not so much distress as the large farmers have.

8368. You say you give land for potatoes at a loss?—Yes.

8369. How is it to pay owners of land, or the local authority of the future, any better than it pays you?—Because I go upon this principle, that if the land is to be given to local authorities it is to be given at a valuation of what it is worth, what it will be worth in the future, and not the competition value which might be got by selling a property as a lot. There are such amenities connected with property that induces people to buy property and give more than its real value for it. There must be amenities connected with the property.

8370. You advocate the compulsory acquisition of land, but, as I understand, although it is very desirable to obtain the land, the owner of it is not to obtain above a certain price for it?—No.

8371. So you are going to compel him to part with it at a moderate price?—I decidedly say so, and the agitation will go on until that is done.

8372. Even if a man is fortunate enough to possess land where it is wanted for public use he is

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

is not to be able to exact a large price for it?—Let there be no mistake about it, that is part of our programme.

8373. Is that fair?—Yes, because we hold that the land belongs to the people. We say that a landlord cannot do what he likes. Landlords have been taught that by several recent statutes. You have got the Agricultural Holdings Act, compelling landlords to do certain things; you have got the Hares and Rabbits Act, and you have got the Irish Land Act, and you have got the Crofter Act, all which Acts tell landlords that they cannot do what they like with their land.

8374. With what money is this land to be compulsorily acquired?—From the Treasury. We see that the Irish get money from the Treasury on what we consider not such good security as we are able to give.

8375. If the local authority acquire this land with public funds you would consider they would have to make it pay?—Yes; we go upon this principle, that if the land is got, and if the tenant gets the security which we propose to give him, the right to call his building his own, and that these buildings cannot be confiscated by the landlord, that will encourage him, because it is said the great spur to industry is security of tenure.

8376. On whom would the burden fall if the transaction was not financially successful?—As a Scotchman, I would answer that question by asking another. What is the security for the money that is advanced to the Irish under the Ashbourne Act?

8377. I am speaking now of the authority which is, as I understand, compulsorily to buy that land and let it out to these people. You say that the money with which the land is to be acquired is public money, that is, from the Treasury?—Yes.

8378. Will not the local authority have to see that this transaction pays, if it be done with public money?—I believe, if the parochial boards, as proposed, are properly constituted, they could see to that being followed out effectually; but then I hold, on the other hand, that the larger authorities, that is to say the county authorities, will not do it because they will be guided by officials who will prove just something like landlords. The parochial boards will watch everyone. They will be intimately acquainted with the circumstances of each owner, and I believe that can be very well done, and that they will watch every case and see that the land is properly cultivated.

8379. I really must press you about this a little. You say that the parochial authority is compulsorily to acquire land, to let it out to these people, and you admit that where public money is engaged the transaction must pay. How are you to secure that it shall pay when it has failed in other hands?—There is the security of the land.

8380. Supposing the land is not productive enough to make the transaction pay, on whom will the burden of the failure of the transaction fall?—If the land is not productive enough, that is if the land is bad land, or if the price of produce falls very low, of course the local authorities will take very good care not to take over any land except really good land; they will take very good care not to do that, they will select the land.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

8381. What is to become of the bad land; do you think the Scottish people are prepared for a scheme of this kind, with an uncertainty about its financial success?—I do not think the Scottish people look upon the thing as uncertain. I believe the Scottish people look upon the thing as a thing that is sure to pay, because, as I have said already, when they get security of tenure it will be a spur to industry, and I believe they will cultivate better than they do at present.

8382. But you would admit, would you not, that there must be no uncertainty about the transaction paying where public money is involved?—No; I think a point should be stretched in the case of the Highlands of Scotland, the same as in Ireland.

8383. That is, you contemplate grants of public money with the uncertainty of return?—The uncertainty is very small. I do not think there is any uncertainty, but I contend that the point should be stretched, and that as the Irish have got the Ashbourne Act, we, in the Highlands, should get something of the same kind.

8384. You contemplate getting rid of the landlords in the present sense of the word, and having a local authority as landlord?—So far as the land they take over is concerned.

8385. Do you think the local authority would be a very indulgent landlord?—I think it would be a very fair landlord. I have had long experience of parochial boards, and I know that the parochial boards I have had experience with wish to do their duty between man and man. They look after the public money, but at the same time they look after the welfare of the community.

8386. But the parochial board is a less popularly constituted body than the County Council?—I by no means contemplate that the present parochial board should have that jurisdiction, not even the parochial boards proposed under Mr. J. P. Robertson's Bill. I mean that the parochial boards shall be properly elected, as they will be by-and-by, the same as local councils.

8387. Are the municipal authorities of the burghs that you refer to not popularly elected?—No, they are not popularly elected; there is not manhood suffrage. The suffrage is not so very low in these municipalities as it is in the Parliamentary.

8388. We have not got manhood suffrage in that case either; do the Fortrose holdings that you mentioned pay well?—I do not know. It has been held from time immemorial, and people do not readily part from old customs.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8389. Why should the landlord suffer by the acquisition of the land by the local authority?—We go upon the broad principle that the land belongs to the people. I represent the Highland Land League, and I represent the Land Nationalisation Society, and a number of other land law reforming societies; and we hold, as a first principle, that there is

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

no such thing as property in land, that landlords are simply trustees for the public good, and that they have no business to get more rent than the land is really worth. We hold that the first thing to come out of the land is the living of the tiller of the soil, the next is the interest on capital that is required to carry on the farm; the third thing, the balance over, is the rent. As it is now, the rent is the first thing; the rent must be paid first.

8390. Granted that the maintenance of the tiller of the soil and a recompense to the farmer are the first consideration, and then, I should say, not rent the next consideration, but the State, for rates and taxes should come next; why should not the landlord be remunerated for the rental profit which he now has from the land?—I think he should; at present?

8391. Yes?—I do not say that, because if you till the land, if the landlord gets what he gets just now, he gets too much.

8392. Never mind what he gets just now, but a fair rental: why should he not have an equivalent in capital value for the fair rental which he has been in the habit of enjoying?—He should have the fair rental, but a fair rental is not a competition rental.

8393. I understood you to say, in reply to a question that was put to you, that you were indifferent to the landlord being compensated for his interest?—The landlord most certainly should be compensated for the balance after the other claimants are paid; that is the principle we go on, I call that a fair rent; but the rents which are taken at present are competition rents, they are not fair rents.

8394. Let me put it plainly; I think you have been misunderstood. You are quite willing that the local authority or the State if it acquires the land should compensate the landlord for all fair interest that he has in the land?—Yes.

8395. But what fair interest is you think to be an open question?—A fair interest I think is what the land will bring in the balance. I say that this will be the fair rent that the landlord should get after the local authority take it over; I think he gets a fair rental.

8396. You said that you would exempt the landlord's house and his personal occupancy from being acquired by the local authority?—Precisely, he has a right to live as well as others.

8397. Then I presume you would also exempt the small holdings in the neighbourhood from being acquired by the local authority?—In my Bill I have said that certain small holdings must not be acquired.

8398. I am not examining you on your Bill, but on your evidence. We have not this Bill in evidence, and I have not seen it. You also believe that it would be unjust to take the small holdings?—I think the small holdings might be taken under the jurisdiction of the local authority instead of under the jurisdiction of the landlord; but that does not alter the position of the tenant. It is all the same if he pays a fair rent.

8399. You would not dispossess the small holder?—No, we only want to create small holders. These small holders remain where they are.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

8400. Whether a man is a landlord or tenant so long as he was using and enjoying the land, you would not dispossess him of it?—Certainly not, it would be undoing the work we want to do.

8401. You would pay him, if he were dispossessed of surplus land which was needed for the public good, in some form or other adequately for the land, which was taken by the State or the local authority?—Yes.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

8402. I think, in your evidence, you will read that most of your answers have been given in the plural number; you say "We." May I ask who you refer to as "We?"—In what part?

8403. More particularly in answer to my honourable friend?—These land law reform societies, of which there are so many, the Highland Land League, the Land Nationalisation Society, and various other societies.

8404 Are you a member of all those?—I am a member of those two.

8405. I think you have taken a very active part in the land agitation in Ross-shire?—Many people do besides me. I have as well as others. The agitation is pretty acute.

8406. You have taken your share?—I take my share.

8407. That accounts for your being so well up in the views of your neighbours?—Quite so. I have had the honour of being president of the Highland Land League for two years in succession, and I am on the council of the Land Nationalisation Society.

8408. You said just now you thought a point had to be stretched in favour of the Highlands with regard to the powers of the State granting money?—Yes.

8409. Of course you include in that the district in which you live, Ross-shire?—I include the district put down in the Crofter Act.

8410. Do you include Alness?—Yes; the Crofter Act includes the counties of Orkney and Shetland, Caithness, Ross, Sutherland, and Argyle.

8411. And what is the value of land about you in your immediate neighbourhood?—Some ten miles down from us, the garden of Scotland I may call it, it is quite as good land as you have in the Lothians, and fully better than you have in Morayshire, which are the best corn-producing counties, and in East Ross the land, even at present, is worth 2*l.* an acre; it was worth 3*l.* before the bad times set in.

8412. Are you speaking just now of a valley up above Ardross?—As you go further west you come to the district I live in.

8413. I would ask you a question or two about that; I think you were speaking of a valley above Ardross Castle?—Yes.

8414. You were speaking just now about that being suitable for rearing young stock?—Yes.

8415. But it would require considerable fencing and so on, would it not?—No, none whatever, because cows are turned out on the out land and hill pasture.

8416. Do you not think there is likely to be a row if these small holders had the right to do that?—

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

that?—No, there is nothing of the kind; they get on very well; we never have any rows.

8417. I was only struck with your statement that young stock might be reared; that struck me as being difficult unless something was done to fence the land?—They fence very little; the five-course rotation is not strictly adhered to.

8418. What do they pay for arable land up there?—Sinking the value of the pasture, I should say they pay about 1 *l.* an acre.

8419. When you say you would stretch a point in favour of the Highlands, what is there in the situation of the land or the circumstances of the tenure of land at Alness that would make you think the law ought to be stretched in your favour, remembering that you have already told us that it is good land, and worth 2 *l.* an acre?—That is all very true. I go by the Crofter Act as it is. If we take advantage for the part of the country in which we live that we are no more entitled to than the agricultural populations of the other eastern counties of Scotland, such as Aberdeenshire, the Lothians, and Forfarshire, but it so happened that when the Crofter Act was framed the whole counties were brought under the operation of the Act, and an Act which was specially designed to meet the Crofters' difficulty we have the benefit of. I do not mean to say we are entitled to it, but we have got it.

8420. Do you think it fair to take advantage of that Act in favour of such land as the land about Alness?—We do, because we have it.

8421. What did the land at Jeaninich fetch on the letting of the 1st May?—My land.

8422. Yes; I do not want to ask any question of a personal nature, but can you tell me what that land let for?—When I took that land under my former lease I paid three different values; I paid 2 *l.* an acre, I paid 30 *s.* an acre, I paid 17 *s.* acre on the land as shown on the map, according to the quality of the land; and when I took the second lease, since the agricultural depression set in, I have got that land at a third less, and that is the price I pay now.

8423. You said just now that the landlord has no right to get above a certain sum for his land?—If a fair rent.

8424. Who is to fix that rent?—The Land Court. We have got a Land Court already.

8425. You would make it the duty of the Land Court to fix the value of the rent that the landlord should get?—Yes; we have the machinery already for doing it.

8426. I think you own a distillery?—Yes.

8427. Would it be capable for the same Land Court to fix the value of your whiskey?—No.

8428. Why not; would you propose that a Land Court should be established for other purposes besides fixing the value that a landlord should receive for his property?—I have already answered another question to the effect that we look upon land as of a totally different nature to other property, that we look upon landlords as simply trustees who are entitled to a fair consideration for managing the land in the interests of the public.

8429. You are not a landlord, I take it?—Of my own land.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

8430. Your own whiskey?—Yes.

8431. Would you object to a court being established to fix the value of your whiskey?—We have no precedent for it, and I do not think such an Act of Parliament will ever be passed. There is a precedent for the other in the Irish Land Act of 1881, and in the Crofter Act.

8432. I will not pursue that further. You said just now you would not object to advancing money for allotments, but you would not approve of them for small holdings; did I not understand you to say so?—No.

8433. Am I wrong?—Quite right.

8434. Where would you draw the line, or rather why would you draw the line?—It is very difficult to draw a line between small holdings and allotments. In this Bill of mine I drew it at 10 *l.* rent, which I would call a small holding.

8435. Why do you object to advancing money from the local authority for small holdings for the purchase or rental of small holdings?—I think, as regards small holdings, if the laws are changed, and it is declared that whatever a tenant has put on the land is his own, and does not become the property of the person to whom the land belongs, the system of small holdings can be carried on very well.

8436. You would not be adverse to the local authority, when it gets the chance of doing so, purchasing a property and cutting it up and letting it, or re-selling it, would you?—No.

8437. I mean in any such case as 20 acres?—No; it would be very well indeed. The people are the best judges for themselves; the local authority being elected by the people, they would be told by their constituents what to do.

8438. My question arose out of your answer just now, that you would not advance money for the purchase of small holdings?—No; you asked me the question just now as to whether a local authority should be empowered to take over land, but then with regard to giving Government money, money from the Treasury for that purpose, I think it could scarcely be expected if they got money otherwise.

8439. Why, if you approve of it for allotments, should you disapprove of it for small holdings, or if you approve of it say for two acres, should you disapprove of it for 25, if it can be done advantageously or safely?—A small holder is a man who cultivates the land and makes his living out of it entirely, and allotments are for those who have other sources of employment, and I look upon it as being a very good thing that there should be facilities for people getting allotments who wish them, because they can rear produce for themselves.

8440. Your evidence is contrary to the evidence of many who have come here to speak on the subject. Why are you adverse to granting money for the purchase of small holdings or to help these small holders?—I am not averse to it exactly. I say in the case of allotments it is necessary.

8441. I quite understand your view with regard to allotments. I want to know why you

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Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

are averse to the local authority lending money for the provision of small holdings?—I am not averse; I say there is no harm in it; but I say it is not so necessary to get money for the creation of small holdings as for allotments.

8442. The provision of small holdings is the object of this inquiry?—Yes.

8443. May I take it from you that you do not think it desirable that the local authorities should purchase land for the purpose of small holdings?—It might be desirable to have the power. I do not think it necessary. The power might be exercised sometimes.

8444. You confine your answer to the provision of allotments?—Quite so.

8445. You said just now that you let your land for potatoes at a loss?—Yes.

8446. Why is that?—To get workers.

8447. Why is it a loss. Why do you let it at a loss. Is it because you cannot get more rent for it, or is it because you do it for charity, or from kindness?—It assists them very much in their living to get these. You are aware, according to our system of agriculture, we have what is called the fallow brake. Then we have a corn brake, then we have two grasses, and then we have a corn brake again, and we clean the land, and then fallow. These people take our fallow for planting their potatoes in, and these potatoes are for harvest potatoes.

8448. You let this land to people when the land wants cleaning?—We clean it for them.

8449. But you let the land with the cottages for potatoes when the rotation comes round, when the land wants cleaning?—Yes, we clean it and give it to them.

8450. How many years do they have it?—They must have it every year.

8451. The same piece?—Not the same piece; the fallow brake,

8452. Suppose a man puts a lot of manure into his ground for two years, and he desired it the third year, he could not have it?—No; we would never change our rotations.

8453. You simply let to your tenants when it suits you to let it go into potatoes for the year?—Yes, certainly; we have got our five courses.

8454. Kindly explain to me how you make it out that you let your land for potatoes at a loss?—That is my fallow brake. I want as much turnip as I possibly can get. I have plenty of manure to put into that land; I can labour it and put the turnips in, and every rood of that land I give to these people is a loss to me, inasmuch as I cannot put my turnips into the land. Besides, these people put a quality of manure on the land which does not suit us. The manure that they put on has often seeds of wild plants, and we have a difficulty in cleaning that land, and we do not like it, but we cannot help it

8455. As a matter of fact, the land you let for allotments at Alness is part of your land that is in rotation?—Certainly; it is this brake that year, that brake next year, and so on to the end, and it comes round every five years.

8456. You were talking of buying calves from these small holders?—Yes.

Mr. *Llewellyn*—continued.

8457. What have you to give for them?—£. 4 or 5 *l.*, after they are milked, in the month of August.

8458. I do not understand that. At what age do you buy the calves?—Three or four months.

8459. When they are weaned you mean?—Yes, we call it milked.

8460. What do you give for them then?—£. 4 or 5 *l.*

8461. What sort are they, black?—There are various crosses. We prefer a cross between a poll cow and a short-horn bull, and the proprietors in the neighbourhood keep such bulls.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8462. As regards Sir Alexander Matheson's experiment, you say you think he could have done better by keeping the land in the hands of the large sheep farmers than by letting it to these small men?—Yes.

8463. Is it not the case that the large sheep-farms in the Highlands have broken down very much of late?—No, I am not aware of it. Parts are converted into deer forests, but I am not aware that sheep-farms are being converted into small holdings.

8464. Are you not aware that sheep-farming has become a losing operation of late?—Yes.

8465. Is it not the case that the rent of sheep-farms has diminished, and sheep-farmers are very anxious to get out of them if they can only get the value of the stock?—They were up to the last year or two, but there has been a change and sheep-farming is doing better.

8466. You do not think in the Highlands that by changing sheep-farms into comparatively small farms in which cattle could be raised that the thing would be likely to pay from an economical point of view?—The first thing a landlord has to face is the outlay on buildings. He has few buildings to put up for sheep farms, but he knows that if his farms are broken up into small holdings buildings are required.

8467. You do not think he can make it pay?—He cannot make it pay.

8468. I understood you to say that small holdings owned by men who do other work in the lowland part of the northern counties are successful?—Yes, they are successful as a rule.

8469. Which counties do you know best?—I know Ross-shire, Sutherlandshire, and Invernessshire. I say no farm has been successful of late years, but the small holders have suffered less in proportion than the large farmers.

8470. Do you mean by small holders small farmers or these lowland crofters who have small holdings, and do some other work?—Crofters are simply small holders.

8471. Are there a very large number of these lowland crofters in the east of Ross, and the lowland parts of Inverness?—Yes, a considerable number, but not on land suitable for large farms.

8472. Do any of them own the land?—No, I hardly know of a case.

8473. Have these holdings been increasing or diminishing of late years?—They have remained for the last 10 years much as they were.

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

were. There is a kind of torpor over all classes, and there is no inclination to make any changes. Things remain as they have been, but I should say up to the last 10 years they have been decreasing, and have been gradually absorbed by the large farms.

8474. In the last 10 years?—Not since the last 10 years.

8475. There has been no diminution in the last 10 years?—No diminution in the last 10 years.

8476. The large farmers like these small men?—I have seen many instances of large farmers grabbing small holdings up.

8477. Do they not like them on account of the supply of stock they get from them?—No, they think in their own interest they want the land.

8478. Are the landlords inclined to encourage those small holders?—The landlord looks for the biggest rent he can get. He knows very well that if the large farmer took a small holding he would not require to keep the buildings in repair.

8479. Is it the fact in most cases of these small holdings that the landlord does keep up the buildings?—With some landlords it is the case, with others it is not; but as I mentioned, in answer to a question a little while ago, such was the demand for small holdings that land was taken over on any terms. A man took a small holding and took the chance of buildings, and there have been many cases of robbery of these small holders. They were allowed to go on and build, and take in land, and otherwise improve, and at the end of the lease their rent was raised upon their own improvements. I know many cases of that.

8480. The old fashion was that the tenant built the house?—The very old fashion was that.

8481. Has that fashion very much gone out now?—It has very much gone out now. Since this land agitation come on no tenant is inclined to lay out a single farthing upon another man's land.

8482. Now, in the counties of Ross and Inverness, where the Crofters' Act applies, and the tenant has got security of tenure, does he begin to lay out the money on his holding?—I think the time is coming when he will, when times get better, but there is a torpor just now. People are not inclined to do much. I hope they will be better by-and-bye. They do not as yet. I do not know a case of people laying out money notwithstanding the security of tenure.

8483. Have these comparatively well-to-do lowland crofters gone into the Land Court?—Yes, they have in many cases. These comparatively well-to-do small holders generally have a lease, and they are not allowed to go before the Land Court, some have not, and they readily go before the Land Court.

8484. What is the nature of the tenure in what is called the Black Isle; is not that in the east of Ross?—Some have leases, some have not. Those who have no leases have gone before the Land Court. I know one man who has made great improvements by the way who has gone before the Land Court who has security of tenure, and he has laid out a great deal of money since.

8485. What kind of size are the buildings on the Black Isle?—The rent of the crofter holdings is from 5 *l.* to 50 *l.*

8486. Do those people live entirely by the land?—Mostly; some of them deal in cattle and so forth; but they mostly live by the land.

8487. Now about the burghs that own land in this case of Fortrose, is the land owned by the burgh?—Yes, by the burgh.

8488. Is any of this land, run-rig land, owned by individuals?—No, it is owned by the burghs.

8489. You think there is no individual holding?—No, it is let to individuals in the burghs.

8490. Have they any lease?—I do not think they have. I am not very familiar with it.

8491. These other burghs have most of them property too?—The burgh of Tain has a few farms that they let.

8492. They have not any land that they let in small plots to people of the town?—No.

8493. Is there any other town that has land?—With regard to villages down in Easter Ross, I know of land having been given to the fishers there for allotment, and in some cases it has succeeded; in some cases it has not. I may mention one case in which it has not. My uncle, Mr. Munro of Rockfield, gave a field to the fishers as allotments, and they cultivated it for some time, but they let it out of cultivation and they allowed it to run waste. I attribute that to this, that there is a very heavy carriage of manure up the brae; there is a very heavy brae, and the land was too far away; I believe if it was at their door they would have cultivated it. I know another village where land has been given for allotments with very great success, and the inspector of the poor tells me there is a marked difference in the state of that part of the village and the rest on account of this land being given to these poor people. They esteem it a great boon. They do not keep cows, but it serves them for potato land, and above all they can keep little horses for moving their produce to market. They esteem it a great boon.

8494. Is there anything of the system of what is called meliorations in Ross-shire under which the farmer holds the buildings, and they are taken over at valuation at the end?—No; there are some cases; I had a case of that kind myself.

8495. Does the system answer do you think?—Yes, it answers upon the whole when it is an arrangement, but we much prefer that the buildings should belong to the proprietor himself. There are many proprietors who are not able to erect buildings, and they go into such arrangements with their tenants.

8496. Has it very often happened in the north that the large farms have monopolised all the good land in the valley, and the small men have been driven up the hill to make the best they can?—I have said so in my evidence in chief.

8497. Though

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Mr. *Sutherland.*

8497. Though the greater part of your evidence has had some relation to the land question in the Highlands, yet there are points of similarity between the land question in the Highlands and the Lowland parts as well?—Yes.

8498. And Ross-shire and the north of Scotland to a considerable extent have a Lowland part and a Highland part?—Yes.

8499. And the conditions in the Lowland part are essentially the same as in the Lowlands of Scotland and England, so far as the interests of the people who wish small holdings?—Exactly the same.

8500. There was some confusion in the evidence on that ground, but I do not see much in it. You made one remark in regard to the law of Scotland as to what occurred in your own case, that is that your father by the law of Scotland was allowed to accept you as a subtenant being his own son?—Being his heir, being his first son.

8501. I put the question as having a bearing on some things that have been said about the subdivision of land in the Highlands; to that extent the law of Scotland allows it?—I believe it allows the first son, the heir-at-law.

8502. Is that still the law?—I do not know; it is very special. I never heard otherwise.

8503. Then I will pass on to the part that refers to your own experience at Alness in regard to the demand for some land by the people to cultivate in their spare hours, that is what is called by you the potato land?—Yes.

8504. That in your opinion shows a demand for such land if there were the facilities for the getting of it?—The raising of potatoes is almost a necessity.

8505. And it is because it is a necessity that there is a demand for potato land, and not for other land for sowing corn?—Quite so; those who want potato land usually keep pigs and they make a great deal of profit by their pigs.

8506. And therefore it is a necessity for them to have land of some kind?—Quite so.

8507. And the most necessary kind of land is potato land?—They are not going to throw their manure away; they want land to put their manure into to put potatoes in.

8508. So that there is a necessity for land in that part of the Highlands?—It is absolutely necessary.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8509. Who cultivates the potato there; does the farmer?—The villagers supply the seed potatoes and we put them in. At all the fishing villages the land itself is let and the potatoes are put in by spade, but we drill it. We draw their manure from their pig-folds, and as I mentioned one very great disadvantage is that the manure is not at all fitted; there are seeds of wild plants, and we have great difficulty in cleaning the land afterwards.

Mr. *Sutherland.*

8510. Do you see any difficulty in the legislation as to land which has been proposed if such legislation were passed being applied to Scotland or the lowland part of Scotland just as well as to England?—None whatever.

Mr. *Sutherland*—continued.

8511. With very slight exception what would apply to England in the same direction would apply to that part of Scotland as well?—I should say so.

8512. In your scheme that you have handed in, as I understand, you prefer the smaller local authority to the larger one; that is the parochial boards to the county councils that are going to be established?—Decidedly.

8513. For the reason that you have stated already that the local authorities would personally know those who applied for land?—Yes.

8514. And that they would be therefore be able to discriminate between those who were really necessitous and those who were not, and those who were likely to be good tenants and those who were not?—Yes, if I might state my opinion from long experience of parochial boards, I know that there is great anxiety to do justice to all concerned in whatever comes under their jurisdiction, and I think it would be the same if the members were popularly elected. Selfish interests seldom come in, but one thing is absolutely necessary, some or other of the members of the board must be intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of any case they have to deal with, otherwise they must rely upon the report of officials which is much to be deprecated. This is what would happen if parochial matters were relegated to county councils. As with the management of the poor, so I believe it would be with the management of the public interest in the holding of township tenants. The adjustment of the economical rent would not, I believe, have often to be referred to the Land Court.

8515. Then you propose that the smaller local authorities, such as the parochial local authority as we expect it to be very soon, would be a very good body to administer the land in Scotland?—Provided it is popularly elected.

8516. I assume that, and the more popularly elected it is the better it would be for the purpose?—That is so, but in this scheme of mine I propose that the Land Court should be a certain safeguard to prevent abuse.

Sir George Campbell.

8517. I want to know how you make out the small burghs do it so badly, and the new authorities will do it so well?—I have already answered as regards the burghs under the present system; under she proposed new system everything on the land becomes the property of the tenant himself, and it is only as regards the ground rent that the local authority comes in.

8518. What I want to know is, if, as you say, these burghs manage it so badly, how would the new ones manage it better?—Before the tenant had no proprietor's interest, but under my scheme the buildings belong to the tenant himself as his absolute property.

Mr. *Sutherland.*

8519. You said that in these burghs the town council are not compelled by any legislative enactment to be good landlords?—They are not.

8520. Whereas in this case you would have new legislation, in which there would be new provisions made under which they would look after

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Mr. *Sutherland*—continued.

after the land under their charge?—The tenants would have an interest in keeping the buildings in order, and keeping the land in good tenure. In the other case there is nothing of the kind. Everything the tenants have done to the holdings at the end of the lease becomes the property of the burgh itself, and they get nothing for it; there is no compensation. In the other case it would be their own.

8521. Can you give any explanation of how it is that these burghs do not make better provision at present for the administration of the land; you stated that they were not good landlords?—No; they are not.

8522. Can you give any reason why they should not be?—Because as town councils they do not want to take much trouble with the lands they let, and they do not care to incur the expense of making improvements upon it.

8523. How does that not come up at the time of the election of the councillors?—I do not know. There was a talk about it I know in the Tain burgh; some people wanted more land as small allotments, but the thing was not carried out.

8524 You think it does not follow of necessity that the same evils that are at present existing in administration by these burghs would of necessity occur under a parochial board?—No. There is another element in these towns of a few thousand inhabitants; the people are accustomed to a town life and in the country villages it is quite different. There is a craving in the country amongst the people in country villages to get land; it is not so in the towns.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8525. How many inhabitants are there in Fortrose?—I think under 2,000.

8526. Is it not under 1,000?—I think over 1,000.

Mr. *Sutherland.*

8527. Does this account for it to any extent, that these lands are not administered by the burghs under any special Act of Parliament?—Yes, decidedly. I think if there is an Act of Parliament passed it would be quite necessary that there should be supervision of the land.

8528. If there was an Act of Parliament passed by the Houses of Parliament with special provision for the administration of land, would not the local authority be bound to administer it in the way laid down by Act of Parliament?—They would in country villages.

8529. But that is wanting in present legislation?—Yes.

8530. You think this would be an element in favour of your proposal?—Yes.

8531. Then you were asked why the small holdings did not pay. I presume you meant Highland holdings?—Partly Highland, partly Lowland, that is arable land with plenty of pasture attached.

8532. They pay?—They pay. A pasture is an immense advantage.

Mr. *Sutherland*—continued.

8533. If in any circumstances they do not pay it is because they have not sufficient hill pasture, or the hill pasture they have already had has been curtailed?—Yes.

8534. You were asked some questions as to the danger that would result to the public funds if advances were made from the State treasury for purchasing holdings. Do you think such great danger exists? I think there is no danger because I believe it would make people more industrious; it would elevate them altogether.

8535. You think there is infinitely less risk than has already been indicated by Parliament in the Ashbourne Act?—I think I said so.

8536. You do not see why if the Ashbourne Act should administer money for the benefit of the landlords in Ireland, the Highland people, who have been so much neglected in the past, should not get advances of the same kind?—I said so very decidedly two or three times.

8537. And in Scotland the circumstances of the Highland crofter, as he is called, arises to a great extent from his historical position?—Yes.

8538. Are you aware that Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, admitted so much in public at Edinburgh?—I am not, but I am very glad to hear it.

8539. You think the position of the Highland crofter is very different from that of the agricultural labourer in England, historically speaking?—Yes.

8540. That makes the great difference in the treatment that may be meted out to both?—Yes.

8541. You have seen the terms of the reference that has been made to the Committee, and I have no doubt you understand it?—Yes.

8542. You are of opinion that whatever Parliament in its wisdom may desire to do with regard to England and the Lowlands of Scotland, they could also find a field of operation in that part of the Highlands of Scotland, such as Easter Ross, parts of Caithness, Sutherland, and Orkney and Shetland?—Yes, Caithness largely.

8543. You see no reason why Scotland should not be included as well as England in any such legislation?—Nothing. I say we have no Allotment Act in Scotland.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8544. With regard to the small holdings, I understand that you are in favour of the municipalization of the land?—The municipalization.

8545. If the local authority were to acquire land and let it out in small holdings that would become municipalized, would it not?—Yes, there is a distinct difference between that and my scheme.

8546. I did not ask whether there was a difference between that and your scheme, but that would be municipalization of land?—Yes.

8547. You are not opposed to the granting of small holdings by municipal authorities?—I did not say I was opposed; I say it is not necessary.

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

8548. Are you favourable to it?—I am not opposed to it, but it is not so absolutely necessary as the other. If these popularly elected bodies see their way to do it I think they should have facilities for doing it, but I do not think they will do so to any extent.

8549. You think they might have the power?—I think they might have the power.

8550. You think they might do it?—Yes.

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

8551. The view that you are giving now seems to be somewhat contrary to the view you have previously given?—I was closely questioned. I said it was not necessary, but desirable.

Mr. *Sutherland.*

8552. You accept it as a step to the goal you are aiming at?—Yes, I accepted it as a step, but I do not think it will be taken much advantage of under the provisions of Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill.

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Wednesday, 10*th July* 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Broadhurst.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Viscount Curzon.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. R. T. REID, Q.C., a Member of the House; Examined.

Chairman.

8553. I THINK you were the draftsman of the Allotments and Small Holdings Bill?—Yes, with the help of Mr. Dodd.

8554. That Bill has now been split into two, I believe?—Yes.

8555. The second part of the Bill dealing with small holdings has again been introduced?—Yes, last year.

8556. I may take it you agree in the policy of the Bill?—Entirely.

8557. What local authority is suggested in the Bill as it stands?—The Bill is applicable to England and Wales, and it is the sanitary authority that is made the authority under the Bill; I think that would be not a very convenient authority when we get, as most of us hope we shall, district councils in England.

8558. You would propose in that case that the local authority should be the district councils?—Certainly.

8559. Will you state what is the object of the Bill?—It is to enable local authorities to facilitate the establishment of small holdings of from 1 to 40 or 50 acres.

8560. Do you consider the interposition of a local authority necessary?—Yes, I think it is necessary to have the interposition of a local authority; in the first place, because I think it ought to secure the Central Government from any risk of loss upon advances of money; and in the second place, because of the local knowledge which the local authorities would have, which would prevent the Government or its emissaries or agents from being led into unprofitable and unnecessary transactions.

8561. In your opinion, then, the Government could not safely undertake a scheme of this kind directly?—I do not think it could; but that, of course, is a matter of opinion. I do not think it could be safely done on so large a scale as these Bills might lead to.

8562. In the Bill you drew there is provision, is there not, by which the local authority will in the long run make a profit out of the transaction?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

8563. Do you approve of that provision?—Yes, I think it is only common fairness. The use of the municipal guarantee to the Government enables the money to be advanced at 3 per cent. (we may say about 3 per cent., I suppose), and I should think that the local authority is entitled in the public interest to have a return out of that transaction.

8564. I suppose the local authority must be considered to undertake some risk?—Certainly; there must be necessarily some risk, however careful they may be.

8565. And therefore you think that they should also be entitled to look forward to getting some profit?—Yes; I also think that the prospect of a profit of that kind would encourage the local authorities to take up the scheme where they thought it was practicable.

8566. Is that the reason why, in the Bill, three-fourths of the purchase-money is to be left as a perpetual quit-rent?—Yes, that is one reason; and I think it would result in a profit hereafter in the nature of a perpetual rental for the benefit of the locality.

8567. Have you considered the question of the amount of the perpetual quit-rent?—I do not adhere myself very rigidly or obstinately to the three-fourths and one-fourth in the Bill. I think it might be advantageous to enable the small holder to advance a little more. That would have the advantage of giving greater security to the local authority, because if more was paid off the sum left at its risk would be less.

8568. A perpetual quit-rent based upon three-fourths of the purchase-money might possibly become a rack-rent, might it not?—It might.

8569. If the value of the land were again to fall it might become a rack-rent?—It might become a rack-rent.

8570. And in that case the security would not be so good as if the tenant had paid off a larger proportion of the purchase-money?—Precisely. I think the risk ought to be with the tenant for whose advantage it is done.

8571. Is there any other advantage possessed by

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Chairman—continued.

by the local authority under the Bill?—There is the power of resumption, which I think is a very important power. It is difficult to deal with what is called the unearned increment, and to preserve it to the local authority; but under the provisions of this Bill the local authority would be at liberty at any time upon paying full compensation to resume possession of a small holding at its full value as a small holding; so that if it become developed into building land, we will say, then the price given would be not its price as building land, but its price as a small holding; that is to say, as land liable to cultivation and subject to the restrictions attaching to small holdings.

8572. Let me just follow that up in another case: supposing that the value of the holding, after the transaction was concluded, was enhanced by a railroad, so that the land which originally was bought as land at a distance from any town or market, and therefore at a smaller price, became very valuable, as land now is in the neighbourhood of towns, even for the purpose of small holdings independent altogether of any question of building; under the Bill would the local authority be entitled to resume possession of that land?—It would be entitled to resume, but in that case it would have to pay the value of the land as a small holding, that is to say, as cultivated land; and I agree that that portion of what is called unearned increment would rest with the small holder; he would get the benefit of that.

8573. Therefore the local authority would not be able to take advantage of the unearned increment due to such causes as those I have mentioned, namely, either the increase of facilities for communication, or some great increase of population?—That is so.

8574. Supposing, for instance, in a district in Wales which at the present time is wild land, gold were found in paying quantities, and that a large mining population came upon the ground, in that case land which might have been bought at 10 *l.* an acre would perhaps become worth 100 *l.* an acre, even for agricultural purposes; but the whole of the profit arising that way would go to the tenant under your proposal, though it is unearned increment?—It would be all enhanced value as agricultural land, and I do not see myself how you can split up the increased value as agricultural land unless you adopt a different scheme altogether.

8575. In fact, all that you have in view in these powers of resumption is the possibility of the land being required for building purposes, or for the extension of a town, or for some public purposes such as a cemetery, or something of that kind?—Quite so. It would give the municipal body a certain control, if the scheme was largely availed of, over a considerable part of the land in its neighbourhood on honest terms. I should not like that a municipality or the local authority should at any time speculate in land. I do not think that that would meet with the approval of most people; but I do think that if it were, by carrying out a beneficial scheme of small holdings, and at the same time to lay the foundation for a great civic property in the future, it would be no disadvantage.

Chairman—continued.

8576. It has been suggested that the object which we have in view might be attained if local authorities were authorised to become landlords; that is to say, to buy land for the purpose of letting it out again, but subject perhaps to conditions as to fixity of tenure and fair rent; that in fact would be a large extension of the Allotments Act, would it not?—Yes.

8577. What is your opinion of that proposal?—I think if that was to be adopted it would not be so satisfactory as Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal, because I think there would be a greater risk thrown upon the local authority, to begin with. They would take the vicissitudes of a landlord's career, which of course we know to be somewhat precarious.

8578. In that case they would have to have a rack-rent, would they not?—They would have to have a rack-rent, and they might be exposed to considerable pressure. I think it is a dangerous thing on a large scale to have a municipality letting land to persons who are their own constituents.

8579. They would have no more security for the payment of the rent than ordinary landlords?—No.

8580. The only security would be such improvements perhaps as tenants might have made?—That is so; it might be necessary that an independent authority should be called in to fix the rent in case of doubt, and a judicial fixing of rent in England and in the Lowlands of Scotland is a novel proposal, which I am not at all disposed to extend too far.

8581. Are there any other objections which occur to you?—I think that a small holder would not care to be merely a tenant; he would take it, no doubt, on those terms, if he could not get it otherwise, but he would very much prefer being a restricted owner, even subject to the restrictions provided in this Bill.

8582. We have had a great deal of evidence both from persons in the position of small holders, and from land agents and landowners, to the effect that there is a large demand for ownership, and that a small cultivator would prefer the independence of a tenancy, from which he might remove himself at any moment, to the responsibility of ownership, where he would be fixed to his land, because he has paid something down, and he could only dispose of his land by sale; do you think that that feeling is prevalent?—It may be that that is the feeling in some parts of the country; I believe myself that there is a great attraction in ownership: certainly it is so in the country that I know of. Everybody in the south of Scotland would very much prefer to have what they might fairly call an ownership of land to having a tenure, provided they could see their way in point of money; but I can quite understand that there may be difficulties in the way of finding capital for the purchase. Under this scheme, of course, the man would only have to find one-fourth, or it may be two-fifths, or one-half.

8583. As regards the larger proportion I do not understand you to suggest that that should be paid down?—Not necessarily.

8584. If

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Chairman—continued.

8584. If I understand your suggestion aright, it is that one-fourth should be paid down as proposed in the Bill, but that the instalments should be so arranged as to pay off a larger proportion in the course of a certain number of years?—Yes, I should prefer that.

8585. Do you think, in the case suggested of the local authority becoming the landlord, there is any danger of pressure being brought to bear upon it for unduly low rents?—I think so.

8586. Do you think there there is any danger of pressure being brought to bear upon the local authority in the case of purchase; for instance, for relieving the small holder of the instalments which he has to pay?—I do not consider that that power is open to them; they cannot do so under this Bill. The local authority would not be entitled to make any such remission, and I think that, if any power of remission was given, it should be very greatly safeguarded, because that would amount to making a present out of the rates to an individual occupier, which is a very serious thing indeed to do.

8587. Therefore, the person in the position of a small holding under this Bill would be in a vice; that is to say, there would be the statutory provisions which compelled him to pay his rent, or if he does not he will be evicted?—Yes, I think that would necessarily be so. I think that the same objection would occur in any similar situation, because, supposing that the local authority were the landlord, and the rent was not paid, the local authority would either have to neglect its duty, so to speak, to the ratepayers at large, or else it would have to evict.

8588. I understand your view is that, inasmuch as the local authority must have discretion in fixing the rent, supposing it is merely the landlord, there would be greater possibility of its sacrificing the property of the ratepayers, owing to pressure on the part of the tenants, than there could be if the small cultivators were owners or *quasi*-owners, under Mr. Collings' scheme?—I think that the temptation would be greater, and the liability to that being done would be greater; but I must frankly say that I should have general confidence in the constituencies at large, and the local authorities, and I do not think there would be a very serious danger of that, although I think there would be some.

8589. In Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill I think that the small holder is restricted in his dealings with the land in certain respects?—Yes.

8590. Would you say what those are?—He is restricted in the first place as regards mortgaging. He is enabled to mortgage, but he is not enabled to mortgage a portion; he must mortgage the whole of the small holding. He is not able to subdivide the holding; that is to say, he cannot sell part and not the whole of it, unless he does so to the local authority, who of course might by that machinery assist him, when they thought proper, to subdivide the holding. The object is to prevent subdivision, and to keep a small holding as a small holding, giving the local authority discretion to vary it if necessary. I think that a simpler method might be introduced into the Bill for doing that, but that is how it stands at present in the Bill.

Chairman—continued.

8591. Is the small holder entitled to sublet?—I do not think that he would be entitled to sublet.

8592. He must remain a cultivator?—Yes; he must be a cultivator, because, seeing that money from the public is made use of for the purpose of creating small holders. it would be an abuse of the powers of the Bill to enable one man to be a small holder in 40 or 50 different places, and to farm out his small holdings and make a profit out of them. I do not think that that ought to be allowed.

8593. Is there any provision in the Bill for the registration of title?—Yes, there is; and I think some little minor improvements might be made by requiring that deeds of transfer and mortgage should all be executed in the books of the local authority. But subject to that (which is a small matter) I do think that under that scheme of registration you can transfer for nothing at all. The form of transfer is provided, the form of mortgage is provided, and any man who could read and write could execute it without any further trouble.

8594. I suppose that the cheapness of transfer is a very important element in small holdings?—It seems to me to be absolutely essential, because I contemplate that small holdings would very often be only two or three or four or six acres, and a lawyer's bill is a fearful thing in regard to small holdings like that.

8595. What provision is there in the Bill for the compulsory purchase of land?—The provisions embrace the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act of 1845, and the Acts amending the same; that is to say, the old machinery, and I must say a most ineffectual and unfair machinery, which has been in existence for more than 40 years with regard to the compulsory taking of land. We did not introduce into this Bill provisions for the simpler acquisition of land by compulsory purchase, because it would overweight the Bill, to begin with, and in the second place, because that is really a proper subject for a general enactment, in my humble opinion.

8596. What are the objections, in your opinion, to the present system of compulsory purchase under the Lands Clauses Act?—Every advantage, so to speak, is given to the landowner. The landowner, however unreasonable he may be, is not liable and cannot be liable to any costs at all. The expense of ascertaining the value of the land is also very great and unnecessarily great, and quite unnecessarily heavy costs are allowed in connection with transactions of that sort. The result is, that the powers of landowners to put a local authority to heavy expenses in ascertaining the value of land are in fact used as a screw to enable the landowner, if he is unprincipled, to extract from the local authority a perfectly unfair price. Then also (although this does not so much apply to this Bill, and therefore I will not say much about it), the present law requires that every interest in land should be ascertained separately. One man, for instance, may have a leasehold interest, and another may have a freehold interest, in the same piece of land, or there may be a life-tenant, and I do not know what else; so that this wretched local authority is

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Chairman—continued.

liable to have three or four trials in regard to the same piece of land, where the same thing is tried in different phases over and over again; in fact one of the great objections to industrial enterprise, in some parts of the country at all events, is this very large tax, which is largely unnecessary.

8597. What alterations would you propose in the system?—There are some alterations which I should heartily endorse which are referred to in a Minute of the Home Secretary (I think it was Sir William Harcourt), which are printed in the Proceedings of the Select Committee of 1881 and 1882 on Artizans' Dwellings. The proposals in effect are, in the first place, that all interests should be assessed together. In the second place, that there should be a larger discretion as regards costs, so that if a landowner is really unreasonable in the opinion of the court he may be ordered to pay costs as well as to forfeit his own, which is the present law. Those are the two most important alterations. Then I would add that I think there should be some restriction as to the number of skilled witnesses that are called; eminent surveyors who get extremely high fees are now called, who give their opinions as to the value of the land from different points of view, three or four of them on the one side being contradicted by three or four on the other side, so that in effect in most of these compensation cases in practical experience you may obliterate altogether the evidence of these skilled gentlemen, because they neutralise each other, and yet the cost of the fees of such witnesses is very large; I think unduly large. There is another point which I do not enter upon, and that is as to the provisions for betterment; to enable the local authority who improves the value of adjoining land to derive in one way or another some part of the advantage which has been created by its own expenditure.

8598. That would not apply to small holdings, I presume?—That does not arise here, and I need not trouble the Committee with that question.

8599. In the case of a transaction under the Bill the local authority would purchase the land, and would, I suppose, divide it into small holdings, and then sell it on these conditions to a certain number of owners; is it contemplated that the local authority should provide the buildings?—There is power for the local authority to provide the buildings. I would be disposed to give the local authority the power; but I should trust to the local authority's good sense not to use it except when it is really necessary. I believe that if people had the opportunity, not now but in a little time after this system had been developed, they would find the necessary money, or begin with humble buildings, and improve them as time went on, and I would like to see that kind of self-help encouraged.

8600. I gather that you think there would be a considerable risk if there were any large loan of money by a local authority for the purpose of buildings, and improvements of that kind?—I should be very sorry to see that on a large scale at all.

Chairman—continued.

8601. Do you think that it is a necessary feature of the Bill?—I think it is desirable to have it in the Bill, because I can conceive cases arising in which it might be very advisable; where, for example, the local authority might be able to purchase an estate, which is practically left to the moles and rabbits at the present time (most of us have heard of such cases), and they might have upon their books men ready who would set out that estate in small holdings, and who would do a good deal of building themselves, but who would require some assistance towards it; it might be a very great benefit to the entire locality in such a case as that. I can conceive such cases, but I do not think that those cases would be of common occurrence.

8602. In a novel case, such as we are contemplating, do you think that it would be sufficient to provide facilities, in the first instance, which might be taken advantage of by those persons who have saved some money, and who, therefore, give hostages to fortune?—Yes, I think so, as a general rule, certainly. I think, as a general rule, the class of persons you wish to attract, and can successfully attract, are those who have some nest-egg of their own.

8603. What I want to know is, whether you think it would be wise and politic for the State to give facilities in the shape of these large loans to persons who are absolutely impecunious?—No, I would not do that.

8604. Persons of that kind must be helped in other ways, I assume?—Yes.

8605. Do you think that it would be sufficient, in order to complete a scheme of this sort, if labourers, who may be supposed to be impecunious, as a rule, and not to have the means of saving money, had opportunities of taking small plots of ground by way of allotments?—I think that is the legitimate and natural thing for them to do, and the natural way of dealing with the question.

8606. That would be the first step in the ladder?—Exactly.

8607. Then, if they continue thrifty and industrious, they might be able to take a larger plot, and in time to save money enough to become small owners?—Exactly.

8608. It would be unwise and premature, in your opinion, to put such men at once in the position of small owners?—I think so. I do think that it would be a very great mistake to spend large sums of public money for the purpose of putting upon the land small holders who have no means at all of their own already saved.

8609. I will just put one other question upon that point. The success of a scheme of this kind depends very much, does it not, upon the first experience?—Yes.

8610. If this first experience were unfortunate, if the money were lent to persons who subsequently failed, and the ratepayers lost the money in consequence, that it would be very damaging to any extension of the scheme, would it not?—It would be fatal to it for years.

8611. That, I presume, would confirm your opinion that in the first instance, at all events, this

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Chairman—continued.

this exceptional assistance ought only to be extended to persons who are able to help themselves?—I think so very strongly.

8612. Let me ask you to follow me in considering the condition of a *quasi* owner under this plan. Assume, for the sake of argument, that the cost of the land and the necessary fences, and so on, is 1,000 *l.*, this *quasi* owner would have to pay 40 *l.* a year; that is to say, he would have to pay down 250 *l.* and 4 per cent. on the remaining 750 *l.*, and we may assume that the 250 *l.* he pays is also worth 4 per cent., and therefore that his annual charge was 40 *l.* a year?—Yes.

8613. Now a tenant, under an ordinary landlord, dealing with property of the same value would, on the average of present rents, not have to pay more than 30 *l.* a year would be?—Probably not.

8614. Therefore the *quasi* owner would be at a disadvantage to the extent of at least 10 *l.* a year?—For the time, yes.

8615. For the 50 years during which his payment lasted?—Yes.

8616. Then the *quasi* owner would be restricted from letting his land; he would be tied to the land?—Yes.

8617. He would be tied there as a cultivating owner, and if for any purpose he wanted to go into something else he would have to sell his land for whatever he could get in the market at the time.

8618. He would also be restricted from mortgaging, would he not?—Not from mortgaging the whole; he would be restricted from subdividing or mortgaging a part.

8619. In fact, practically he would be in the position of a mortgagee already, would he not, to the extent of three-fourths of the value of the land?—Yes.

8620. Then he would also have to provide his own buildings?—Yes.

8621. And in bad times he would be compelled under statutory provisions to pay his instalments?—Yes.

8622. He could not expect relief in bad times such as the tenant whom I suppose to be sitting next him would probably obtain from his landlord?—Quite so.

8623. He would also be liable, would he not, if the value of land increased, and his property was likely to be valuable for building purposes, to have it taken from him and to have to start afresh?—Yes.

8624. With all these disadvantages as compared with a tenant, do you think that there would be many persons who would be inclined to take advantage of the facilities of this Bill?—I do not think that there would be; I do not mean for a moment to say that many men at present would not prefer to pay their 3 per cent. upon the value of the land if they could get the land; but the whole purpose of compulsory power is to provide for cases where they cannot get it. It is quite true that the landlords in this country accept, as you put it in your question, 3 per cent. (in fact I think a good many of them take less), but then they get paid in other ways so to speak for it. Of course the

Chairman—continued.

advantage of getting the land cheap is very much relished by those who can get it cheap; but we are dealing with the cases of landlords who will not give facilities for getting land. I think that one of the chief benefits of this Bill would be that it would induce landlords to take a different view from what they do in some parts, although I know in many parts they will give facilities.

8625. Speaking not of exceptional landlords, or of exceptional cases, but speaking generally, do you think, that landlords would object to let land upon the terms proposed; that is to say, at 4 per cent., with an obligation upon the tenant to provide buildings?—No.

8626. And subject to the power of resumption in case the land became more valuable?—I should think that a good many landlords would be very willing to do that; but those landlords have got their own tenants now in the farms, and they do not like, and practically could not take away the land from their present tenants, although, of course, in law they might be very able to do it. I think you must also bear in mind that the person who becomes the small holder under a scheme of this kind would have, as you pointed out in previous questions, a certain degree of advantage in the nature of unearned increment. He would gain the full value of the agricultural land if the agricultural land was enhanced in value as agricultural land. He also would have what I think would be very valuable, the sense of ownership (for it is, in fact, ownership). A man will undoubtedly work very much harder at his own land than he would at other people's, and would take a great deal more interest in it, and I think he would find that it would pay him.

8627. In the case of a man who has invested all his property in the purchase of his land, and has become a restricted owner, what is he to do by way of provision for his family in the event of his death?—He cannot divide this property. Of course, whatever will he makes under the provisions of the Bill would be respected; but the holding would have to be sold.

8628. Therefore the death of a tenant who had no other property, and who desired to divide his property among his children, must be followed by the sale of the land?—It must be followed by the sale of the land; or if he likes he can mortgage for a certain sum the whole of the land to pay portions to the younger children and leave the land to the eldest, who would be able to manage it and pay the charges; that could be done.

8629. Would not the necessity to sell the land be a great obstacle in the way of taking such holdings, because you find, do you not, among poor people who have any land at all a strong desire that the land should continue in the family?—Yes; I think there is no doubt that there is such a desire; they take great pride in the land.

8630. Would they be able to have the feeling of ownership of which you spoke properly developed, if they knew that on their death the land must be sold?—I agree that a feeling of that kind would certainly deprive them of some of the satisfaction.

 8631. Taking

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Chairman—continued.

8631. Taking the case of a man who entered upon such a property to-day, he would not get the full advantage for 50 years; that is to say he would probably be dead long before the full advantage accrued, and at his death the property would have to be sold, would it not, if he had a family?—Not necessarily, because he might provide that it should be mortgaged to a limited amount, as I have described.

8632. He can only mortgage to the extent of one-fourth, can he not?—Yes, that is the only interest he has except the improvements, but he could mortgage to the full extent of the improvements. Supposing he had taken (and there are many such cases) 40 or 50 acres in the condition of moss, and had improved it so much, that instead of being worth 10 *l.* an acre, as it was when he bought it, it had become 60 *l.* an acre, all that improvement is entirely his own, and is protected in the most complete manner conceivable. So that he could mortgage to that extent. But of course the alternative brings us back to the old story of settling property. Everybody knows there is a great difficulty in regard to settlements, and that settlements in effect in this country have been prejudicial to the diffusion of land as it should be diffused.

8633. You will understand that my questions are not directed to the question of the wisdom of the provisions, but I am only asking your opinion as to what the practical effect would be?—I think the questions you have put may be answered in the affirmative; there is no doubt that there is the disadvantage that you have pointed out.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8634. You were asked by the Chairman with regard to the advantages of tenants as compared with these *quasi* owners; and one statement was that the tenant was freer to leave his tenancy at any time; does not that remark as to greater freedom apply equally, and even to a larger extent, to the power of sale which the restricted owner would have; could not he sell at any time?—Yes; at any time.

8635. Would not the process in the in the Bill enable him to realise all his improvements, and everything be put into the land in a more satisfactory way than a tenant could realise any improvements in case he left his tenancy?—If the tenant was to go out he would expect the incomer to pay him for all his improvements in one way or another, and by selling outright he would get precisely as much advantage as if he were a restricted owner with the power of sale.

8636. The restricted owner would get the highest market prices for all his improvements, would he not?—Certainly.

8637. Might he not in that way be able to do rather better than a tenant could by any method of compensation for improvements?—At all events, fully as well. I do not see that that is an objection to your Bill.

8638. Do you think that a *quasi* owner is secure in his tenure in a manner in which a tenant could not be?—The *quasi* owner has already advanced, according to the proposal of the Bill, 25 per cent. of the value, and he has an

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

absolute right to remain, subject to paying the quit rent. Of course, a tenant is liable to perpetual re-fixings of rent, and will always have to pay the rack-rent; he will be always necessarily required to pay the full rental of the land leaving, of course, the rental upon his own improvements. I think that the one is a mere tenancy and the other is a real ownership.

8639 Then, in regard to the position of the *quasi* owner at death, in what respect is a family of a tenant at his death better off than the family of a *quasi* owner?—I cannot see that they are better off at all.

8640. Is not the family of a *quasi* owner much better off, seeing that his sons can sell the holding at the highest price in the market?—He can sell, and he can mortgage; the difficulty of distribution is no greater in the event of death, where what is to be distributed is a restricted ownership, than where it is a tenancy; indeed, I should have thought that there was greater facility for distribution in the case of a restricted ownership than there is in the case of a tenancy.

8641. The Bill deals at present with the creation of small holdings; do you see any difficulty in applying the principle of the Bill to present sitting tenants?—I do not see that there would be necessarily any objection to that. Of course, it is introducing a perfectly new element into the scheme. The reasons for this Bill, or at least some of the reasons of this Bill, are the necessity of getting small holdings and the impossibility of getting them at present. Of course, where you have existing small holdings, it may or may not be advantageous to enable the small holders to become freeholders, or to become restricted owners. I can see no objections to such an extension, except the objection on the ground of the investment of public money in enterprises of such a character.

8642. That is a matter of general policy; I am speaking of the holdings within the same restrictions as to size as the Bill now contains, that is, up to 50 acres?—Quite so. It is really a very large political question, because it means the advance of public moneys to transfer to tenants the ownership in the farms which they occupy, for the creation of occupying ownership; but not for the creation of small holdings. This is a Bill for the creation of small holdings. I do not know that I would see any objection to its being extended so as to create occupying ownership; but that would be somewhat beyond the scope of the Bill as hitherto regarded.

8643. It was assumed by the Chairman that landlords let small holdings at 3 per cent.; how is that assumption arrived at?—I suppose the assumption is that money invested in lands, let in the shape of farms, ought to produce about 3 per cent. I do not think it always does produce quite so much.

8644. Is it not admitted that small holdings pay a much larger rent per acre than large holdings of a similar kind of land?—I believe they are and have been more able to pay rentals in bad times than the larger farms. I do not know that a farm of 40 or 50 acres would let at much more per acre than a farm of 200 or 300 acres.

8645. The

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

8645. The assumption that the land is let at 3 per cent. depends, of course, upon the selling value and the market price of it, does it not?—Certainly.

8646. Seeing that, perhaps, 3-4ths or 7-8ths of the land of England cannot come into the market, how is this market price arrived at, so that we should be able to say that small holdings are let at 3 per cent. upon their value?—I do not know that they are, in point of fact, let in any very great number at such a rental as that; but that is a question I should be very sorry to answer.

8647. What I want to get at is this: to say positively that a *quasi* owner of a thousand pounds' worth of land would stand at 40*l.* rental, while, as a tenant of the same land, he would give 30*l.* rental (that is to say, in the former case he would be paying 4 per cent. upon the value, and in the latter case 3 per cent.), is based upon the assumption that the market price is such?—That assumes that land let in small holdings is let at 3 per cent.

8648. Which is an assumption?—Yes.

8649. If it should be found that small holdings by valuation should pay a much larger percentage, say in some cases 4, 5, or even 6 per cent. on a valuation, than that supposed disadvantage to the *quasi* owner would not exist, would it?—No, in that case of course it might be converted into an advantage in favour of the restricted owner.

8650. You said that it would be necessary for an intending owner to have some means of his own; if facilities under this Bill were given generally throughout the country, do you think that it would open up in rural districts a career to the younger men, labourers and others, and be a sufficient inducement to cause them to save, or otherwise provide for becoming small holders?—I have not the least doubt of it myself. I may tell you that in the part of the country in which my home is, and where I live a good deal, an extremely wise landlord about 40 years ago let small holdings of from three or four up to perhaps 10 or 15 acres, to persons in parishes in which there was not even a village, and these holdings were taken up 40 years ago upon leases of, I think, 20 years or thereabouts by persons employed on the property, foresters, hinds, and others, and these holdings which are called pendicles in that part of the country have subsisted from that day to this, the leases being renewed by this landlord, who is a very good landlord. The people there have built for themselves and have shifted for themselves, and are very comfortable and well-to-do; and those holdings have been a great blessing to the locality according to the opinion of everybody.

8651. On that point I understand you think that under the provisions of the Bill the risk to the ratepayers is reduced to a minimum?—I do not think that with a reasonably prudent local authority there is any risk to the ratepayers; at any rate there ought not to be any risk. There would be less risk still, of course, if the small holder were required to pay something more than one-fourth.

8652. Then is it your opinion that in addition to giving advantages to those who are already in a position to pay down the required proportion to

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

become small holders, this scheme would generally speaking open up a new career to the rising generation in rural districts?—That is my belief and hope. I think that people in the rural districts when they saw that this sort of thing was possible would begin saving and being more careful and thrifty, and they would get up from an allotment to a small holding, and then from a small holding to a big one, and there would be a career opened for them in the country.

Chairman.

8653. I will just ask you to explain one answer which you gave just now; I understood you to say that you thought in the event of death the small owner might be in a better position than the tenant?—Yes.

8654. A small owner would have his capital invested in the first place in the one-fourth of the purchase-money of the land?—Yes.

8655. And he would have another portion of his capital invested in building?—Yes.

8656. His free capital would therefore be small, and he could only get at his invested capital by a sale which, as it must come at a time which he is not able to choose himself, would be of the nature of a forced sale, would it not?—Yes.

8657. On the other hand, the tenant would have all his capital free?—He would have some of his capital free, certainly.

8658. Would he not have it all free practically, because he would not have any invested in the shape of buildings or permanent improvements under the present English system; some of it might be in stocks or in personal property of different kinds, but it would all be practically free, would it not?—What I meant to convey in my answer to Mr. Jesse Collings just now was, that the interest of the small holder in his holding would be more easily disposed of to his advantage at his death than the interest of a tenant in his holding; but I did not mean to deny that there would be more capital in the case of the tenant than in the case of the restricted owner.

8659. The advantage you speak of refers to any improvements he may have made, I presume?—No doubt.

8660. Which in the one case would be his own for the purposes of sale, and in the other case would be the subject of compensation under the Acts dealing with compensation for improvements?—No doubt. But I should like to add, if I might be allowed to do so, that in comparing the situation of a small holder under such a Bill as this, and that of a mere tenant, it must not be forgotten that there would be great difficulty in getting the buildings erected by the landlords. A landlord might be very willing to let out his land as a small holding, but I am sorry to say landlords are not necessarily great capitalists, and they might find it very onerous if they were to cut up a farm of 400 acres into eight or ten holdings on which they then had to set up so many farm steadings and houses.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8661. Do you think that a Small Holdings Act would be as operative without giving to the local authority compulsory powers to obtain land?—No; it would not meet those cases in which the

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

landlord declined to sell his land: but I am bound to say that I hope and believe that the compulsory powers will be comparatively seldom used. I do not believe that if Parliament proclaimed a policy of small holdings by such a Bill as this, landlords would set their faces against it. Some would, of course, but a good many would not.

8662. Do you not think that the Act would be much more effective even for the voluntary settlement of these questions, if there were in the Bill compulsory powers behind as a last resort?—That I think is in effect the case in this Bill. It enables the local authority to take land by agreement, or by compulsion.

8663. Do you consider that the compulsory power is a very valuable portion of the Bill?—I think it is. Every one knows that there are some parts of the country in which, whether from territorial reasons, or from other reasons, I know not what, landlords will not part with their land, I know a case myself in which a whole valley is in that position.

8664. Do you not think it would be promotive of the acquisition of land by the local authority voluntarily, to have compulsory powers in the Bill?—I should like to see compulsory powers there, although, as I have said, I should hope that they will have very little recourse to them.

8665. With regard to the main scope of the Bill, do you think that it is just that the resources of the State and of local authorities should be employed for the purpose of creating small freeholds?—I think it is just if they are saved from loss; it is a matter of public policy, I think.

8666. If the same end can be obtained by pursuing a somewhat different policy, that is by a system of perpetual leases, or by a guaranteed occupation, do you not think that that would be a juster system to the State and to the local authorities?—I do not myself quite see how you would save the pocket of the State, or the credit of the State, in any way by substituting a system of perpetual leases for a system of small holdings such as this. It seems to me that you have always to go through the preliminary stage of getting the land from the landowners either by compulsory purchase or by voluntary purchase, and unless the landlords were willing themselves, without the intervention of the State, to grant these private leases, I do not see how such a system would help the State.

8667. You are aware that under the Allotments Act the local authority can acquire land, and simply let it without the tenant finding any proportion of the money, or there being any guarantee?—Yes.

8668. Would it not be possibie to extend the principle of the Allotments Act to small holdings?—I do not question at all that it would be possible to do so.

8669. Would it be possible to do it with advantage?—I think, myself, that it would be a good thing if allotments were made rather larger than they are under the Act of 1887. I do not know how you can lay down a rigid line as to where allotments end and small holdings begin. But I must say that I prefer, for the reasons which I have stated, Mr. Jesse Collings' scheme

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued

rather than that which you have suggested. On the other hand, I am bound to say, that I think the object is of very great value, and if I could not get the one I should get the other.

8670. Then you see no objection to land being acquired for small holdings under the principle of the Allotments Act?—I should see this objection, that I think it would be imposing a greater risk upon the local authority because they would have to buy the whole. If, for instance, there is 1,000 *l.* worth of land they would have to buy the whole 1,000 *l.* worth; under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill they would immediately get 250 *l.* of that repaid to them, so that supposing the land fell in value they would not lose so much, whereas if they were simply to let it they would undertake all the ordinary risks of a landlord which, I am sorry to say, are rather heavy.

8671. Do you not apprehend that there would be a great many more applicants for tenancies in such a case than there can possibly be applicants under Mr. Jesse Collings' system, which requires a man to be almost a capitalist before he can enter upon a small holding?—I do not think that in the beginning there would be so many applicants for holdings under Mr. Jesse Collings' scheme as there would be under the scheme which you propose; but if once a thing of this kind was to get started, and was to be successful in the onset, I believe you would find from every capable parish, so to speak, people would be coming up and gradually availing themselves of the benefits of the Act.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

8672. You said just now that in Scotland the people prefer ownership to tenancies?—Yes, I think they prefer the feeling of ownership.

8673. I presume that you consider that this sort of *quasi* ownership, which would be set up by Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, would be attractive to the labouring class?—It is very analogous to the feu which there is in Scotland, which has always been a very popular institution, I think.

8674. The feu is known, but the tenure proposed by Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill would be a new one, would it not?—I think it would very soon become known.

8675. Do you think that land held under the tenure established by this Bill would be equally marketable at the death of the holder, or at any time when he wanted to dispose of it?—I think so. I think, myself, that it would create a new sort of career in the different agricultural parts of the country, as I said before; of course, there would be some which would be quite small holdings of three or four acres, while there would be others of eight or 10 or 15 and 20 acres, and I think you would find the people would be looking after them very sharply; at least, that is my opinion; it must be to a certain extent speculative, because you do not hear people clamouring for small holdings. What you do hear them complain about is something of this sort: "There is nothing in the world to be done unless we go away into the town, or get work on the railway." I think if they had an opportunity of advancing themselves provided, they would avail themselves of that opportunity in large numbers.

8676. Do

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

8676. Do you think that any scheme for taking land which includes taking it compulsorily is likely to succeed, unless there is some cheaper mode of getting it compulsorily than is afforded under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act?—I think it is most important to get a cheaper method.

8677. Do you not think that it is a matter of vital importance to have a cheaper method of getting the land compulsorily?—I think it is almost essential, because the present system is so onerous, and so frightfully expensive, and if I may say so, if it is *ad rem* in the inquiry before this Committee, I cannot imagine any more important legal reform than to lay hold of the Lands Clauses Act, and reform the methods of compulsory purchase of land, so as to have an honest and fair but cheap method. You can conduct a reasonable litigation for a couple of hundred pounds; but you cannot conduct the purchase of four or five thousand pounds' worth of land for 200 *l.*, or anything like it.

Sir George Campbell, a Member of the Committee; Examined.

Chairman.

8678. I believe you wish to give evidence specially with regard to the case of Scotland?—I desire to give evidence specially from what I may call a Scotch point of view. I am a Scotchman myself, and born and bred in a country district of Fife; and of late years I have spent some part of the summer in Aberdeenshire. I have also dealt with small holdings in India as the main business of my life for many years; and I have kept my eyes open, and on the present occasion I have made some inquiries in Scotland, and I desire to give some evidence to the Committee from the Scotch point of view.

8679. Do you think that in Scotland there is any great necessity for the creation of small holdings?—That raises the question as to what is a small holding; whether it is a tenancy or an ownership. I have come to the conclusion, not only from what I know of Scotland, but also from my experience in other parts of the world, that in order to obtain that great social and economic object, which I believe small holdings to be, it is necessary that there should be some security of tenure to the tenant. I believe that we have not yet achieved the means by which an economical arrangement likely to last between landlord and tenant, pure and simple, can be obtained. The disadvantage to the landlord in regard to demands made upon him, if he has to equip very small farms, is so great that I know of no instance, in either Scotland or any other part of the world, in which that system has permanently succeeded. Therefore I am very much impressed with the belief that, if we are to have small holdings, it is almost a necessity that there should be some system under which the tenant has, if not complete ownership, at least such security of tenure that he may invest his capital in improvements with confidence.

8680. Then I gather that, in your opinion, the existing law of compensation does not fulfil your condition?—As regards large farmers, I think it does to a certain extent fulfil the condition, and perhaps it may be improved to such an extent as to do so, but not as regards small farmers.

8681. Could you say definitely what improvements you would suggest in the law?—No, that is just my difficulty. I am not prepared very confidently to suggest improvements. I think that is one of the things which the Committee may perhaps eventually consider, whether such a means can be found. At present, as regards the mere question of security for improvements, I am not prepared to suggest means, but I would rather suggest that the difficulty is to find any means of giving tenants something in the nature of fixity of tenure.

Chairman—continued.

8682. Will you explain the system of tenure in Scotland?—First, I should say, with regard to the use of the word "property," we use the word property in Scotland as including feus, and my belief is that feus are not only like but absolutely identical with the tenure which Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill suggests.

8683. Upon that point may I ask whether in Scotland the feu ever bears so large a proportion to the rack-rent, as is proposed in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—In a very great many cases it bears a very much larger proportion. Perhaps I might be allowed to state separately the whole questions of feus a little later on in my evidence, because it is a very difficult and important question. All I would wish to say in answer to the question you have just put to me is this, that feus are treated as property in all the Scotch registers; and when we speak of property we mean, not only something in the nature of freehold, but also feus; that is to say, a right of a permanent holding where the tenant has a *dominium utile*, as it is called in Scotland.

8684. Will you state the differences in the system in Scotland as compared with England?—If you will allow me, I should like to state, first, the points in which there is a similarity. There are a great many points in which, so far as I can find, there is no material difference between Scotland and England. Perhaps it would be enough to recite them without repeating what has been said about them already. In the first place, I find in Scotland there has been everywhere the same tendency to absorb small holdings till comparatively recent years; but in recent years there has been a turn of the tide, a turn of the tide checked by the difficulty about buildings, which, I believe, has been already explained to the Committee.

8685. Is there any demand for small holdings in Scotland?—There certainly is a considerable demand for small farms; a demand in excess of the supply; but as to the general question as to whether there is a demand for small holdings, I should say that perhaps that demand is less pronounced in Scotland than it is in England; I should attribute that less keen demand for small holdings in Scotland, first, to the success of large

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Chairman—continued.

farms in Scotland, and the habit of large farms, which has become so general in all parts of Scotland, excluding the Highlands, and, secondly, to a cause which I think has been already explained to the Committee, namely, that the position of the farm labourers and the farm servants is better there than it is in England; they are not driven by the same necessity to acquire small holdings; and it is also due to the more adventurous spirit of Scotch people, the consequence of which is, that a man who has got beyond the stage of a superior farm labourer is not perhaps so much inclined to settle down upon a small farm, but would rather aim at a larger farm, or to colonising in some other parts of the world, or to better himself by going beyond the position of a very small farmer. I think I can confirm what has been said by others, that in Scotland, as in England the active demand is certainly more for tenancies than for the ownership of farms. The habit of ownership has so little existed in Scotland that I do not think that otherwise than in the neighbourhood of towns there is a very great demand for ownership, though there undoubtedly is a demand for tenancies in excess of the supply.

8686. You spoke of the demand in the neighbourhood of towns and villages; is that different in any way from what we have learned in the case of England more or less?—I should think that the demand is not so pronounced, for this reason, that while in Scotland ownership of small agricultural holdings has been much rarer than in England, and almost non-existent in Scotland, in the neighbourhood of towns and villages from ancient times under ancient charters, there has been a good deal of small ownership; and I think that the supply of small property has nearly kept up with the demand in Scotland; and there is not a demand in excess of the supply in the neighbourhood of towns to the same extent as the Committee has been told exists in England. I might also say in regard to small holdings near towns, that I find in Scotland there is the same tendency which has been explained to the Committee as regards England, namely, to a divorce between the ownership of these small properties and the cultivation of these small properties. Although the old small properties have come down to modern times, in very many cases they have been acquired by investors who let them out, so that the small owner is not the occupier or the small cultivator.

8687. Now we will come to the points of difference between the system in Scotland and in England?—As regards the ownership of land, I may say that I think there is this very considerable difference in Scotland, that small agricultural ownership, as distinguished from the ownership, of plots near towns and villages, exists much less than in England; and, in fact, is almost non-existent. There are a great many of what would be called small owners in Scotland; that is to say, owners of farms of 200, 300 or 400, acres, but small agricultural owners under 100 acres, I think are almost non-existent in Scotland.

8688. What is the reason of that?—I think that is due to the peculiarity of the Scotch law. Scotland has suffered from a civilization almost before its time, and from the introduction of a

Chairman—continued.

régime of law and lawyers which may have been beneficial at one time, but which has had the effect almost of shutting off small ownerships. It has operated in this way: Very early, indeed, in Scotland a system of registration of tenure was instituted, and under the feudal system every acre of land in Scotland became the property of some individual as superior under the feudal system. Then the law of Scotland prescribed that no deed affecting real property should be valid unless it was registered. We have had our law of registration in Scotland for a great many years, and as a consequence of that, or in connection with it, there has arisen this doctrine of Scotch law that there is no such thing as prescription without a written registration of title. Consequently, under the law of Scotland, you can have no such thing as a squatter becoming owner. Now, I think the Committee has been told that a very large proportion of the small owners in England are people who were originally squatters who, as it were, had irregularly taken their share of common land, and who, by a certain number of years' prescription, have become owners. By the law of Scotland there can be no such prescription. Men who acquire land under a title after a certain number of years acquire a right by prescription though there may be flaws in their title; but a mere squatter in Scotland can acquire no title by even a thousand years' possession. The consequence is that there are no small owners of that kind, such as exist in many parts of England. Not only can the squatter not acquire any rights, but as part of this system in Scotland of confining rights to recognised registered titles, no such thing as customary rights have ever been recognised in Scotland. There is nothing corresponding to English copyhold, and there is nothing corresponding to the Ulster tenant-right. So, again, as regards commons there is no such thing recognised as popular rights in commons. Such a thing as the Committee has been told of, that a man who has grazed a cow for 30 years on a common has a right to graze a cow there for ever, cannot exist in Scotland; there are no such things as popular rights of common there. Wherever there are commons (which are called "commonties" in Scotland), they are merely commonties as between the landlords; and there is no such thing as the popular rights of commoners. Consequently, that source of the creation of small holding does not exist in Scotland. Altogether the result has been that, owing to the want of recognition of custom, no security of tenure in land has sprung up apart from the civil contract of lease which is prevalent in most parts of Scotland.

8689. I think you have something to tell us about the feu system?—Yes. The feu system in Scotland, as now understood, is very like the tenure which would exist under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill. It is a system which exists in a great part of Scotland, in the lowland parts of Scotland, and in parts of Scotland which have been longest cultivated and occupied, but it has not yet extended to a considerable part of Scotland, where there is an entire absence of security of tenure, such as existed in Ireland before the Irish Land Acts were passed. But as regards the

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Chairman—continued.

the parts of Scotland where that feu system exists, it might have been a great advantage in Scotland in the way of creating small ownerships in the sense of feus; but it has so happened that it has not been so.

8690. Will you explain what the system is in the first place?—The old feu system of Scotland is simply this; that a man pays a fine, a *grassum*, as it was called, corresponding to Mr. Jesse Collings' part payment; and in consideration of that *grassum*, which is merely a security that he will fulfil his engagement, he obtains the land upon a perpetual rent. The old feus were subject to what were called "casualties," which corresponded to the fines and such like charges under the English copyhold system, but I need not enter upon that

8691. Are those feus accompanied by conditions?—Yes, some of them are; some of them are accompanied by conditions to a certain extent similar to, though generally not to so great an extent as English building leases. In fact, the feu is now practically the Scotch form of a building lease. But to show the effect upon agricultural tenancies I should explain that the old Scotch feus in ancient times, as appears from ancient charters, were not tenancies at a fixed rent, but were rather perpetual tenancies at rents liable to be varied something like Irish tenancies. But after the Union at the beginning of last century, whether it was because as it is sometimes said, that people in Scotland were frightened by the Union with England, and the landlords were afraid that they might be ruined by competition with England in consequence of Free Trade, and that perhaps they would wish to go to London, or whatever was the cause, at all events, after the Union a very large system of feuing land at a perpetual rent sprung up in Scotland, and a very large portion of the farms in some parts of Scotland were so feued by the landlords to the then existing tenants at the then existing rents.

8692. Of course, we have not to deal with question of feus, which are in the nature of building leases, but dealing with the feus of agricultural land, used for agricultural purposes, I understand you to say that in many cases the perpetual rent payable was the existing rent at the time the feu was granted?—It was the existing rent at the time the feu was granted.

8693. Has there been any difficulty in obtaining the payment of that rent?—None whatever.

8694. But has not the agricultural depression affected Scotland?—It has in no degree affected the paying of feu rent because, as I was going to explain, those feus that were given in old times were at a rent which is now so very low that it is a mere quit rent, and there can be no possibility of a question as regards the collection of feu rents.

8695. I can understand that wherever the feu rent is of the nature of the ground-rent in England, which bears a very small proportion to the rack rent, there would be no difficulty in its collection, but I think you said that the feu rent in some cases was larger than is proposed for the quit rent under Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, that is to say, it represents more than three-fourths of the value of the land; in those cases has there been any difficulty in the collection of that large feu?—No; because I think in those cases those feus are almost invariably in reality building leases. I should like to explain a little more about these feus if you will allow me. The old feus at the beginning of the last century seem not to have come in till the large farm system had also come in. Though a very large amount of land in Scotland is now held upon feu it is almost entirely held by large owners, or at all events by owners of considerable farms, and it so happens that the feu system not having extended to the part of Scotland where small farms exist, there is not to my knowledge any considerable or indeed I may almost say, any number of small farms which are held in feu.

8696. Then the system as it exists in practice does not resemble in detail Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal, because in no case does the feu rent represent anything approaching the rack value of the land?—That is certainly the case as regards old feus, but there are some cases of modern feus near villages where it is something of that character, where the feu rent approaches to the value of the land but does not exceed it. But what has caused the feu system to be almost useless for agricultural purposes is the modern change under which every man who feus his land expects to get a building rent for it and not an agricultural rent, so that everywhere in Scotland you will find in regard to land which is agricultural land, at the present moment that land lets at 1 *l.* or 2 *l.* or 3 *l.* an acre, if it is feued the landlord is not content unless he gets 20 *l.* or 30 *l.* or 40 *l.* an acre.

8697. In fact, the land that is now being feued is in every case building land?—The land that is now being feued is in every case building land, or land for villas, and in no case is let for agricultural purposes, except in a few cases near villages, where something in the nature of large gardens may be given as feus on reasonable terms, and even those cases are very rare.

8698. I scarcely see the bearing of this on our present inquiry, because we are not concerned with the question of building land?—Just so. It has rather this negative bearing upon the inquiry, that it explains why the old feu system in Scotland, which was identical with Mr. Jesse Collings' plan, has ceased to be practically operative in Scotland, as regards new feus, and why that means of creating small agricultural ownerships has ceased to exist now.

8699. The effect of the evidence which you have given is to show why there are so few small ownerships in Scotland?—That is so.

8700. Now as regards small tenants; what have you to say about them?—As regards small tenants, I should like to divide small tenancies into small holdings near towns and villages, and small farms. Perhaps I might, in the first place, speak only of small farms, real agricultural tenancies. These small farms are common in Scotland, I may say, only in parts of the country north of the Tay.

8701. Are they diminishing in number?—In many parts of the country they have diminished, but it cannot be said that they are diminishing now. On account of the reaction which has taken place in favour of small farms, I think we may

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Chairman—continued.

may certainly say there is no diminution going on at the present moment. I think that landlords who have small farms find that there are a great many people willing to take them, whereas large farms are constantly thrown upon their hands, and the consequence is that the small farms are now maintained. They are common, as I say, in some parts of Scotland north of the Tay; they are common in Orkney and Shetland. In Orkney the land is very good, and it is a very remarkable instance of the success of small holdings there that the farmers there export eggs in large quantities.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

8702. Are you referring now to small ownerships?—No, I was speaking of small holdings generally. There are some very remarkable and gratifying instances of small ownerships in Orkney, which are held under the Norwegian tenure, and when I said there were no small ownerships in Scotland I should have excepted Orkney, where there are some small ownerships, but only a limited number. I believe also in the south-west of Scotland there are one or two places, such as Loch Maben, where they exist, but speaking of Scotland generally, they do not exist. As regards small tenancies, they exist in Orkney and Shetland, and they exist in Caithness, but the great part of Caithness has been in recent times absorbed by the very large farmers; they exist all along the eastern counties north of the Tay; there are a good many of them in East Ross, and in parts of Inverness. There are also some very interesting small tenants near Elgin, who also do some work beyond their farm work. There are also a good many small tenants in Forfarshire and Perthshire, scattered about here and there. But so far as I can see and learn, the only part of Scotland, that is Scotland apart from the Highlands, in which the small farm system has been well developed as a system, is in parts of Aberdeenshire.

Chairman.

8703. Are there any marked differences between the system of small farms in Aberdeenshire and in England?—Yes, historically there has been a very considerable difference. Up to comparatively recent times, the farmer owned the buildings and equipped the farm, and had either by contract or by custom some sort of security. Those buildings and equipments were called in the language of Scotch law "meliorations," which practically is very much the same thing as improvements, and the custom or system in Aberdeenshire was that when a farmer went out of his farm those meliorations are taken off his hand at a valuation, either by the landlord or by the incoming tenant. I do not know whether it is peculiar to Scotland, but on sheep farms there is a system under which the outgoing sheep farmer has the right to have his stock taken off his hands. But coming back to Aberdeenshire, the custom of meliorations under which the tenant owned the houses and the equipments of the farm, has to a considerable extent diminished in recent years. The requirements of farmers have increased; Scotch landlords were enterprising people, and in prosperous days were willing to make the best of their estates, and the farmers were unwilling to pay the cost of the meliorations; and the consequence is that in very many cases in Aberdeenshire the meliorations have been acquired by the landlord, and it is the function of the landlord to equip the farm.

Chairman—continued.

8704. That is a return to the English system?—That is a return to the English system. Up to the present time that has not caused the small farms to be blotted out; but my fear and apprehension is that the tendency always will be in that direction. The equipment of small farms is an ever increasing burden upon the landlord, and if the old Scotch system altogether falls into desuetude, and the burden falls altogether upon the landlord, the tendency will continually be to diminish the number of farms and to approach to the system of large farming which is common in other parts of Scotland. The system in Aberdeenshire is a very peculiar and a very important system. I am not a witness who is competent by personal experience to give the full details of it, and I would only suggest that it might be very important that members of the Committee should acquaint themselves with the system which now prevails in Aberdeenshire, where there is on the one side a considerable remnant of the old system, and on the other side considerable experience in the new system.

8705. Is there any other part of the country to which you wish to call our attention?—My native county is Fife; and perhaps I may take Fife as the type of the south of Scotland, that is the country south of the Tay; for, as I have said, I think the prevalence of small farms is confined to the districts north of the Tay. Taking Fife as a type of the south of Scotland, I may say that I think perhaps the large farm system is seen in Fife under the most favourable circumstances under which it is to be seen anywhere. The farms in Fife are all of moderate size, and there are comparatively few excessively large farms. The number of farms of 1,000 acres, or paying more than 1,000 *l.* a year, in Fife might be counted on your fingers, and the great mass of Fife farms are say from 150 to 1,000 acres, and paying from 150 *l.* to 1,500 *l.* a year. Under those circumstances I am bound to say that in Fife the opinion has always been very much against small farms. The holding of a small farm of from 40 to 70 or 80 acres by a man capable of cultivating it with his family, has been always depreciated in Fife opinion. I have always been told from my youth upwards that a successful farm labourer who takes a small farm is a fool for his pains; the result is that he works much harder than a labourer, and does not live any better. There is no doubt in recent years there has been some change in this respect; and the landlords always find that the smaller the farm the more easy it is to get a tenant. But I have not yet been able to get people who are best acquainted with Fife to confess that it would be desirable, either for the landlords or for the tenants, that the larger farms should be split up into small ones. They say that the trade of farmer in these days is a trade requiring a good deal of science and knowledge; that it requires a great deal of buying and selling

of

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Chairman—continued.

of stock; that the man must attend markets and must know something of the qualities of beasts, and that he must devote a good deal of time to that subject which is inconsistent with cultivating a very small farm. The large farms are the fashion in Fife. Even now, when the larger farms have suffered terribly, I do not see that there is any creation of small farms going on. There is, on the other hand, a very large number of small holdings in the other sense in Scotland, that is to say, small holdings near towns and villages. The holding of a man who cultivates a considerable piece of land, and does some other work besides, would be thought by a good many people to be a very excellent form of tenure; but there has been some decrease of those holdings also. The other day I talked to a man whom I expected to be very much in favour of small holdings of that kind, a man who was a Radical in politics and a radical in principles, who had risen to edit a newspaper, and who was living in the county town, and had a great knowledge of these matters; and I found to my surprise that he depreciated these small holdings. He put it in this way: he said I was born and bred upon one of these small holdings. In the days of my father looms were prevalent in the country, and looms come in very well with small farms. In those days labour was cheap and corn was dear; it did not pay us to go out to labour, and did pay us to grow corn at home; and we had the looms always to work upon in bad weather. But now-a-days with the increase of manufactures, looms have gone out; and there is so much occupation that a man can employ his time more profitably than cultivating corn upon a small holding. That is what he said; and my own impression is that that that is so at the present moment with regard to corn; but on the other hand I find that places which had been used by weavers and people of that kind, are very much taken by people living in small towns and villages; and there are a very large number of small holdings near villages in Fife. Near many of those villages there are what are called acred lands, which I rather gather to be a descent from the ancient tenure of former times; those are small plots of land that are available for people in villages; the people very largely avail themselves of that tenure. In that respect Fife is merely a good example of that which exists in many parts of England.

8706. Taking Fife as a type of the southern country in Scotland, there seems to be no strong feeling in favour of small holdings, and no very large number of small holdings?—There is no very large number of small holdings in the agricultural sense of small farms; but as I have explained that there are a very large number of small holdings, in the sense of holdings held by people who have other trades and occupations.

8707. Does this absence of small agricultural farms constitute an obstacle to the improvement of the labouring classes?—I think it certainly does; there is no doubt it is generally acknowledged in Scotland that there is a difficulty in the want of a bridge by which a labourer may rise to be a farmer.

8708. Has any attempt been made to provide

Chairman—continued.

such a bridge?—In the neighbouring county of Forfarshire a considerable agitation has lately gone on, and considerable attempts have been made to provide a bridge. There was formed what was originally called a Ploughmans' Union, but what is now called the Small Holder's Association; and that has become an association of considerable activity and importance. I have lately had an opportunity of visiting those counties; and I have ascertained the views and the hopes of the representatives of that association; and also I have had an opportunity of seeing and inquiring into some interesting experiments which have been made by the late Lord Dalhousie and other liberal landlords who have attempted to create small holdings; and if the Committee will allow me, I might perhaps tell them what those experiments are. I had heard a good deal of Lord Dalhousie's experiments. I found that they had not been carried out on a very large scale, that he had lately created a few small farms which seemed at first sight to be model farms. The landlord in that case had undertaken for the most part, but not entirely, the function of equipping the farms; they were farms of about 40 acres each. But when I came to inquire into the circumstances of those small farms I found that to begin with there was some reason to think that they were somewhat exceptional; the land was peculiar land, specially suited for the cultivation of carrots and other vegetables, and such like things; the men who had taken the farms were men who were somewhat exceptional, and were to some extent half-traders as well as farmers, and had carts in which they took the vegetables to Dundee and engaged in enterprises of that kind. The men I found were not at all content with the buildings which the landlord had put up for them. A liberal landlord had put up expensive buildings: but the farmers were apt to say that they did not quite suit them; they hankered after the old system in which the farmer managed his own buildings. And as regards the equipment of the existing farms I found that, while the landlord put up the main buildings, the tenant had been left to put up the subsidiary buildings, and he had done so, but no definite arrangement had been made as to compensation in case he left the tenancy. He had simply put up the buildings trusting to the good personal relations between himself and his landlord. Therefore my impression was that the difficulties of inducing landlords to equip small farms, as a whole, have not been fully and entirely solved by this experiment. Perhaps I may say with regard to the state of things in Forfarshire, that I was quite satisfied that in that county there really does exist a very considerable demand on the part of the superior ploughmen for small farms, and that if a means could be found for creating these small farms it is extremely likely that the system might be very considerably extended.

8709. Now coming to the changes in the way of legislative provisions which you would suggest as a remedy, will you tell us what conclusion you have arrived at?—As regards the changes which I might suggest, I confess that I myself see very great difficulties, and that I am not

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Chairman—continued.

prepared to recommend with confidence changes which I think would very rapidly bring about a radical remedy to the difficulties to which I have been referring. My impression is that small holdings are very much like the trees in a natural forest; so long as they exist naturally, and so long as large numbers of them remain together supporting one another they exist very well, but that just as when once you destroy a forest of that kind it cannot be replaced without a great deal of artificial aid, so also if once you have destroyed small holdings you can only replace them very carefully and laboriously. There is no easy road to doing it.

8710. Now as between owners and tenants, which class of small cultivators do you prefer?—My impression is that there is very much difficulty in either case, and it is hard to say which, as a practical matter, ought to be preferred. My own view is that small ownership of some kind is preferable, but that small tenancies are upon the whole more practicable. I think that the present moment is a very inauspicious one for creating small ownerships, for while the state of depression has thrown a great deal of land into the market, on the other hand the depreciation of landed property has frightened people, and a great many people who might under other circumstances have been willing to buy land on such conditions as Mr. Jesse Collings proposes are rather frightened by the reflection that if they had bought land 10 or 12 years ago they might have been ruined, and that if a further change took place in the value of land they might still be ruined; my impression, therefore, is that to create small owners is a very difficult task, and that the present moment is not perhaps the best time to choose, but I think that all that the law can do and social effort can do to promote such ownerships should be done.

8711. Supposing that the Legislature favourably regarded Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal as far as England is concerned, would you wish that it should be applied to Scotland?—Certainly I should.

8712. That is as regards the creation of ownership or *quasi* ownership; now what would you propose as to the creation of tenancies?—My own impression is that little can be done towards the creation of tenancies, unless some good system can be devised under which a tenant should have security for his improvements; and I think that it is scarcely possible that that can be done unless you find some means of encouraging a system under which the landlord gives the money for some part of the equipment, and the tenant finds the rest. I myself am extremely favourable to bringing into play the aid of municipalities so far as regards not only allotments in the narrower sense of the term, but also what I may call larger allotments, plots of from one to 20 or 30 acres, near to towns and villages. I think it is quite possible that if the municipalities acquired land, they might with advantage let out a good deal of it in that way till the town extended, and till the land was occupied by building leases. But on the other hand, I confess that I have very great doubts as to whether under the present circumstances it would be possible for municipal

Chairman—continued.

authorities to acquire land on a large scale, in order to let it out in farms. The Scotch idea of a farm is that a man cannot live on a farm of anything less than 40 or 50 acres; and if the municipality were to acquire land on so large a scale as to enable them to let out the land in such farms as that, it would also be necessary that they should take a considerable part in the equipment of the farm and buildings; and I think that everything would then depend upon who your local authorities are. We have scarcely yet seen the local authority that would be capable of dealing with the land in that way.

8713. Independently of any proposal for turning local authorities into landlords, are there any other legal reforms you would like to see adopted in Scotland with a view to giving additional facilities for the creation of small holdings?—Certainly, I think that those parts of the Scotch law that I have alluded to as having interfered with the creation of small holdings should be remedied, but at the same time I must confess that to a great extent it would be shutting the door after the steed is stolen. It is doubtful whether a very immediate advantage would be derived. I think that there ought to be a prescription by simple possession as being an advantageous reform of the Scotch law in many respects, besides facilitating small holdings; I also think that there should be a recognition of customary rights, and I think that something more might be done to enable limited owners to grant feus on reasonable terms; for I find that owing partly to the difficulty which limited owners have of giving feus, and partly to the introduction of English ideas in very many places in the north of Scotland where there has been no tenure at all, the tenure which is now given is a 99 years' tenure, or perhaps 50 or 60 years, or even as low as 40 years' tenure may be given rather than feus. Therefore I think that everything should be done which it is possible to do to facilitate the granting of feus by limited owners. In that connection I think what is very necessary is the completion of the Ordnance Survey of Scotland, so that you might have something more than what you have now, namely, registration of deeds, and that you might have a complete registration of titles with great facilities for disposing of the land without the large expenses for the conveyance.

8714. Are there any other suggestions which you wish to make?—I was asked a question as to whether I could suggest any improvements in the Agricultural Holdings Act. There is one very radical improvement which I think goes to the bottom of all these things which has not yet been effected; and that is a change in the law of fixtures, so that a tenant who puts up buildings or any other fixture should be free to carry it away if he cannot come to terms with his landlord. Also I think that with regard to fruit-growing, which is a very important industry, some special provision is required in Scotland (where we have not got it at all) to give compensation for the planting of fruit trees. I think you would also require a very radical reform of the railway law, and the law affecting markets, and such like; for my impression is strong that the

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Chairman—continued.

the railway system and our whole system has to a very great extent thrown trade into those channels which are favourable to big traders, and the big men and the middlemen rather than to small producers and the small consumers; that we cannot bring it into smaller channels without a very considerable alteration of the law. Then, specially as affecting the acquisition of small ownerships, there is one important reform which I think is required in Scotland which has not yet been mentioned, and that is, the abolition of the monopoly which is at present enjoyed by a very small number of Scotch banks. My own impression is that, under the present conditions in Scotland, you ought not to restrict a man's right of dealing with his property if he has property. I think, on the contrary, the only way in which you can facilitate small holdings is to give a man a very complete freedom of transfer, and of borrowing. I think that very often the creation of small holdings might be facilitated if a man who has not the money to buy a small holding was able to borrow the money cheaply and to pay a rent in the form of interest upon the money borrowed. Money is so cheap now that it seems to me if there was full and sufficient security upon the land and greater facility of realising, the rate of interest ought to come down very much. But owing to the system under which certain banks have got a monopoly of note issue in Scotland you have a monopoly which it not only narrow, but is continually narrowing, because every Scotch bank that goes out diminishes the number. The consequence is, that you have a complete trades union system in Scotch banks. They advertise, for instance, in the papers the rate of interest which the Union of Banks agreed to allow and upon which they will lend money; so that there is no free trade in banking in Scotland now.

8715. I think you have now gone through the suggestions you have to make, especially affecting Scotland. Is there anything you wish to add?—There is only one question which I think I might say a word about, and that is the question of the advance of public money by the State in order to afford facilities for small holdings. I have no objection to advances of that kind in principle, if the purchaser pays down part of the money as security; but anything like the Ashbourne Act would be useless in Scotland. Unless you go a great deal further, because the small holding tenants who exist in Scotland are not very numerous, and there is no tendency to blot them out at present. The Ashbourne Act would only be useful in creating small holdings, if you went beyond the existing tenants, and offered money to all comers, so that they were good men, and willing to advance a sufficient portion of the money so as to give security. Then I think if there are to be any advances of that kind, something might be very well advanced to landlords for farm building as well as to tenants; in fact, I am under the impression that the present law allows that.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

8716. You said you desired to alter the law of Scotland; by that I understood you to mean

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*—continued.

that you desired that the tenants should be compensated for buildings they had erected. Do you not think the Agricultural Holdings Act by which the man is compensated to the extent of the value he has added to the landlord's estate would suffice?—I understand the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act to be that in regard to buildings, and everything of that kind, he is only compensated when he has put up the buildings with the express consent of the landlord.

8717. I ask you whether that difficulty is not removed, and whether the principle of compensating a man, if he adds to the value of the landlord's estate, would not be a satisfactory way of determining the compensation in favour of the tenant?—Certainly, if you could determine the compensation in that way, but the landlord's objection is, "it would be very hard upon me to make me pay for buildings put up without my consent, and which I do not want." On some of the small holdings in Scotland the landlord has put up a house, and the tenant has put up corrugated sheds for his cattle and things of that kind. In case the tenure comes to an end, and the landlord refuses to buy these things, it would be a great advantage to the tenant to carry them away which, under the present law, he cannot do.

8718. That is under certain circumstances in the Agricultural Holdings Act; is it not reasonable that, if a man adds to the value of the landlord's estate by any specific buildings, the principle of the Act should be applied to it; and he should be compensated?—Certainly.

Mr. *Sutherland.*

8719. You made some remarks about the analogy between feu in Scotland and the proposals contained in Mr. Collings' Bill, but you also explained afterwards the feus in Scotland were used mostly for building purposes?—They are now.

8720. Do you know still of any instances of agricultural land being held on feus in Scotland?—Half Scotland is held under old feus. A very large proportion of the landlords of Scotland hold their land under a subject superior.

8721. To that extent they are feus, but do they pay the quit-rent?—They pay the quit-rent.

8722. To whom?—To the superior, the landlord. They are old feus; the feuar is practically the owner, and he pays the quit-rent to the superior.

8723. I am not very clear to whom you refer in these cases as his superiors; are they corporations of ancient burghs?—No; the corporations of the ancient burghs have charters of their own under which burghal land is held. In the Lowlands of Scotland, in Fife, a very large proportion of the land of large landlords is not freehold in the sense of being held direct from the Crown, but is held under a subject superior under old feus. I have had experience of several grades of feus and sub-feus.

8724. But that is not very widely common

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Mr. *Sutherland*—continued.

throughout Scotland?—In the parts of Scotland I know best it is very widely common.

8725. I do not know whether you have within your knowledge an experiment recently made in the north of Scotland, in regard to buying up land and selling it out for agricultural purposes, under the feu system, in Sutherland, at a place called Rosehall?—No, I am not aware that it is so, but in some of the villages there is a great deal of land feued. In Carnoustie, in Forfarshire a great deal of land is held in feu, and is cultivated.

8726. This experiment would be interesting as bearing on the question now before the Committee, and I am sorry you do not know about it. You are not aware that that experiment was not successful at first, on account of many vicissitudes the scheme had to pass through, but ultimately, and now I may say it is likely to be successful?—I do not know this particular case in Sutherlandshire, but I should think it extremely likely it might be successful if it was undertaken by a discreet person or company.

8727. Then you express your own preference, I think for ownerships, but you thought that carrying out a system under which tenures would be encouraged rather than holdings would be more likely to be successful in Scotland at the present time?—I think it is, perhaps, more practicable, but it is an opinion which I give with great diffidence, because there has been very little experiment made; at all events I should explain that when I say ownership, I include feus and tenures of the nature of Mr. Jesse Collings tenure, I think that tenures of that kind are quite as good as absolute freehold.

8728. You also referred to the ownerships that exist in Orkney, and I understood you to say they are rather limited in number?—I think so; I made some inquiry in Orkney, and I am sorry to say that I am afraid the reputation of the lairds of Harray, and people of that kind, is rgther typical of a very excellent type of small landowners than that they are very numerous.

8729. Do you know that almost the whole of the parish of Harray and part of the parish of Birsay is altogether occupied under these small proprietors?—Yes, I visited that parish, and I was very much interested in it, and, perhaps, I might say they are a very valuable specimen of the small owner. They are not by any means barbarous or uncivilised, but they are a very superior people; many of them have been all over the world, and have made a little money, and have come back to their small ownerships; and there has been a good deal of transfer of small ownerships from one member of a family to another, but they are maintained; the land is good, and they are an extremely favourable specimen of small holders. They hold under a Norwegian tenure, and not a British tenure.

Mr. *Sutherland*—continued.

8730. Could you give to the Committee any idea of the size of the holdings in Harray?—I do not think I could say at this moment, but at all events I can say that they are small holdings within the nature of small holdings as dealt with by the Committee. I think they would be under 100 acres.

8731. You do not suppose that any of them exceed that, and from your observation you would say that some of them are as low as four or five acres?—I think so.

8732. And some even have not got more than half-an-acre with a house. Did you notice any of that size?—It might be so; I am not certain how that is, but in that case it would be merely a case of an owner of a house and garden, and not only throughout Orkney, but throughout all Scotland, and especially in Fife the numbers of owners of houses and gardens are reckoned by thousands.

8733. Were you struck with the moral qualities of the people so far as you could judge?—In Harray?

8734. Yes?—As I have said I thought them a fine set of people. They were men of the world, they were not at all remote islanders, they were people who had seen the world, and had every intelligence and apparent good quality.

8735. Did you make inquiry as to the state of pauperism in the parish?—I think I was generally told there were no paupers there.

8736. You stated that you thought the present time was inauspicious for very small ownerships, and you explained your reason for that opinion was, that land and its price had undergone very many changes of late?—And all the changes are downward, so that people who have bought land have burnt their fingers, and everybody who holds land wants to get rid of it.

8737. Would that fact influence holdings as well as ownership?—It influences tenancies in this way; that the landlords have no money to put up buildings, and that great difficulty arises in that respect.

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Friday, 12th July 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir Edward Birkbeck.
Mr. Broadhurst.
Sir George Campbell.
Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.
Mr. Chaplin.
Mr. Jesse Collings.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Compton Lawrance.
Mr. James William Lowther.
Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Halley Stewart.
Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Sir HENRY LONGLEY, K.C.B., called in: and Examined.

Chairman.

8738. I THINK you have come to give evidence as to the policy and practice of the Charity Commissioners in the sale of charity land?—I understand the Committee desire to have some information upon that point.

8739. Will you kindly say by what that policy is regulated?—The policy is based primarily upon the 24th Section of the Charitable Trusts Act of 1853 (16 and 17 Vict. c. 137), which provides that, "Upon application to the Charity Commissioners, by the trustees or persons acting in the administration of any charity, representing to the said Board that, under the special circumstances of any land belonging to the charity, a sale or exchange of such land can be effected on such terms as to increase the income of the charity, or would otherwise be advantageous to the charity, such board may, if they think fit, inquire into such circumstances, and if after inquiry they are satisfied that the proposed sale or exchange will be advantageous to the charity, may authorise the sale or exchange."

8740. I think that Act has been supplemented by a subsequent one, namely, the Charitable Trusts Act of 1855?—Yes, the 18th and 19th of Vict. c. 124, Section 29, of that Act provides that "It shall not be lawful for the trustees or persons acting in the administration of any charity to make or grant, otherwise than with the express authority of Parliament under any Act already passed or which may hereafter be passed, or of a court or judge of competent jurisdiction, or according to a scheme legally established, or with the approval of the board, any sale, mortgage, or charge of the charity estate." Then there follow some provisions as to leases. Those two sections together found the jurisdiction of the board as to sales.

8741. You consider that the principle of this legislation is that no sale shall take place unless it is advantageous to the charity?—That is so.

8742. Now, have the Commissioners put forward in any of their reports their views on this subject?—Yes. In the Report for 1872, the 20th Report, there is a passage which perhaps I might be allowed to read as it is not very long; "The number and magnitude of these transactions" (that is, sales of charity estates) "may be referred to as showing both that considerable facilities exist for the sale of charity estates, and also that there is no unwillingness on the part of trustees to avail themselves of them. The law requires as a condition for our approval of these sales, that the terms shall be shown to be sufficiently advantageous to the charities. The observance of this condition is strictly insisted upon by us in all cases, regard being had not only to the present value of the property to be sold, but also to any prospective improvement that may be reasonably anticipated. The prices realised have, in fact, led almost invariably to a large accession of revenue to the charities; the direct augmentation of the income being greatly enhanced, moreover, by the more or less complete relief from all outgoings and expenses of management, and also by the entire regularity of payment. Upon the grounds both of public policy and of advantage to the charities concerned, we are disposed freely to facilitate these sales upon terms which shall satisfy sufficiently the requirements of the Act of Parliament. The trustees of a charity being a variable and commonly numerous body, not usually resident in the locality, and restrained, moreover, by the rules of law from acting freely in the management of the property and the expenditure of the rents, are rarely found to be eligible landlords. The fluctuation of the annual income, moreover, arising from the varying charges and drawbacks incident to the tenure of landed estates, and in these cases especially difficult of control, creates a serious objection to the retention of such estates for the endowment of charities, for the purposes of which a fixed and regular income is especially desirable. The management of these properties is, in fact, almost universally found to be attended with a more or less excessive amount of expenditure. Instances have come under our observation in which the cost of management has habitually amounted to one-fourth, or even a

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Chairman—continued.

larger proportion of the gross rental, and this where the members of the governing body have been gentlemen of station and intelligence, having undoubtedly the desire to discharge effectually in every particular their duty as trustees. It may, perhaps, be urged in opposition to the present sale of these endowments, that their value may in the course of time be expected to increase; but this contingency is always taken into consideration by our board in deciding upon the expediency of any proposed sale; and admitting even the correctness of the expectation referred to, we must hesitate in coming to the conclusion that it is either expedient or just to the objects of a charity that an important present advantage should be sacrificed for the chance of obtaining hereafter a remote and uncertain benefit."

8743. Does that Report express your present views on the subject?—Yes, with some slight modifications, due to what has happened in the interval. I may perhaps note in the first instance, as bearing upon the inexpediency suggested in that passage as to the holding of landed property, particularly agricultural property, by trustees, that the recent agricultural depression has in our opinion made it still less desirable that the income of a charity, the necessity for the regularity of which is so obvious, should depend upon the rent of land. On the other hand, with regard to the last passage which I read, to the effect that "we should hesitate in coming to the conclusion that it is either expedient or just that an important present advantage should be sacrificed for the chance of obtaining hereafter a remote and uncertain benefit," I may say that we now perhaps do look a little further forward than our predecessors of that day did, and we have, I think usefully in many cases, refused our sanction to the sale of charity land on the ground that it possessed considerable prospective value. Those anticipations have been in several recent cases abundantly realised. Therefore I think that perhaps the main change in our policy from that day to this has been that we are inclined to consider that as a charity lives for ever, it can afford to wait.

8744. That consideration has tended slightly to lessen your readiness to make sales?—I should say on the whole it has.

8745. What has been the result of the action of the Commissioners in thus dealing with the property under their control?—To begin with the most recent case, I may say that this very day the board, I believe, will sanction the sale of a very important property for which a price 19 per cent. in excess of that which was offered some nine or ten years ago has been obtained. I mention that as indicating the beneficial result of the control of the Commissioners over the sale of charity lands. I put together a couple of years ago some facts as the result of our operation upon the sales of charity property; they were put together for another purpose, but I may just mention that in three cases which came under my notice at that time, the trustees had proposed to sell the land in one case for 550 *l.*, in another case for 450 *l.*, and in the third case for 400 *l.* The prices eventually realised were 2,000 *l.* in one case, 1,400 *l.* in the second, and 1,350 *l.* in the third, showing that the trustees had formed an entirely inadequate estimate of the value of the land. Of course I do not mean to say that those prices were obtained next day, or immediately, but within the course of two or three years. I may add that there came under notice a short time ago, within three months, two cases in the metropolis, one of which was a case of purchase, therefore it is not material to the present question. But the other was the case of a sale of a very important estate, and there the sale was effected eventually at a price 31 per cent. greater than the price originally asked.

8746. I do not wish to interfere with the course of your evidence, but I would like you to direct your evidence more particularly to the special object of our inquiry. We are not examining into the action of the Charity Commissioners except so far as it affects the creation of small holdings?—Quite so.

8747. I think you have stated the principle which actuates your dealings in every case to be the direct advantage of the charity concerned?—That is so.

8748. How does that principle affect the question of letting land for small holdings?—I have been so far dealing with the question of sale, not of letting.

8749. How, in your opinion, does it affect the question of selling land in the first place, I will say, for small holdings?—As regards sales, I do not suppose that we are careful to inquire to what purpose the purchaser proposes to put the land if he gives us what we consider to be a sufficient price. But if I am to understand that there is to be a restriction imposed on the trustees of charities to the effect that they should sell only to a limited class of purchasers who desire to let the land in small holdings, I should say that such a restriction would tend to depreciate the market value of the land.

8750. By confining the demand for it to a particular class of purchasers?—Yes, by narrowing the market.

8751. Do you think that if it were considered that public policy required the creation of small holdings, there would be any objection to restrictions being introduced which would lead at all events to the land being offered in small quantities?—I should think any restriction on the freedom of sale must tend sooner or later to affect values. Of course, I am answering now merely as to values, not as to policy.

8752. As to leasing, I might perhaps ask you whether you have anything to say as to the requirements which now exist with regard to leasing for allotments charity land, especially in connection with the question that has been raised as to whether these conditions should be extended to larger tenancies?—Trustees are free to let charity land at present as they please, provided they do not let it beyond 21 years. We do not know anything about the letting of charity land unless it is let for a term longer than 21 years.

8753. But under the Allotment Acts are not trustees of charity lands required to let land for allotments?—Certainly.

8754. What

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Chairman—continued.

8754. What I wish to suggest is whether that condition might be extended, so that in cases of other lands the Charity Commissioners might be required to offer them in the first instance for small tenancies?—There, again, I should say that any restriction in letting would probably tend to diminish, or might have the effect of diminishing the rent to be obtained.

8755. Have you found in the case of allotments that the charities have been injured by the condition which Parliament has imposed?—No, I cannot say that they have, but then we have a dispensing power (which has been exercised in some cases, though not very frequently) under Section 11 of the Allotments Act of 1882, of granting a certificate of exemption.

8756. That would be in a case in which in your opinion the charity would suffer by the condition being complied with?—Yes. That of course raised the question, which was so fully discussed before the Committee of 1884, whether or not Parliament intended allotments to be let under that Act, irrespective of the effect which the letting would have upon the interests of the particular recipients of the charity.

8757. But you have interpreted it to mean that the direct interests of the charities are not to suffer?—We have; we considered that in the absence of express direction by Parliament that the interests of the charity were to suffer, it was not for us to assume the contrary.

8758. As you are aware, in the Allotments Act allotments are confined to areas of one acre? Yes.

8759. Supposing it were extended to five acres, would you see any serious objection to it?—None whatever, so far as the interests of the charity are concerned.

Mr. *Lowther.*

8760. Do you find that the interests of the beneficiaries under the charities are antagonistic to the interests of those who wish to take the land for small holding purposes?—I do not think they are generally, because allotments for the most part command a good price, and I should think in a good many cases it would be for the benefit of the recipients as well as of the allottees that the land should be let in allotments. But there are cases, particularly those cases in which we have been asked to grant certificates of exemption, in which the land (as the Committee of 1884 saw) may be permanently deteriorated by letting in allotments, and in those cases the interests of the beneficiaries would suffer.

8761. Can you give the Committee any case in which you received a petition from the inhabitants against charity land being set out in allotments?—We had a case before us the other day (I do not remember the name at the moment) in which the inhabitants of the parish were divided. Some of the labourers wished the land to be let in allotments; and, on the other hand, we had a numerously signed petition from other labourers, or persons who call themselves labourers (I do not know whether the one body was more deserving of the name than the other), begging that in the interests of the recipients of the charity the land might not be let in allotments; I can furnish the Committee with the name of that case afterwards, if they desire it.

Mr. *Lowther*—continued.

8762. One of the proposals which we have had made to us is that the local authority should take over all charity land at a valuation; do you consider from your experience of the trustees of charities, and the beneficiaries under charitable trusts, that that would be resisted on the part of the trustees and beneficiaries, or do you think they would be willing to agree to a proposal of that kind?—I should think they would not be willing to agree to it unless they were satisfied that they got the full price for the land; such a price as we, working under our Acts, would see that they got.

8763. Would not the mere fact of the limitation of the purchasers to one body and also the fact that the price to be paid was not the market value, but a price to be fixed by some other means, tend to diminish very much the value of the charity land?—I think it would. The charities have had experience in the past that restrictions on the sale of charity land do diminish the value. Until the establishment of the Charity Commission no land could be sold without an order of the Court. As a matter of fact, land often was sold where the charity could not give a title, and the land was sold at miserably inadequate prices.

8764. If Parliament were to compel you in approving sales of charity lands to insert special provisions to the effect that the lands were to be divided up into certain sized lots, do you not think that a provision of that sort would tend very much to depreciate the value of charity land?—I think that it would tend to depreciate the value; I think any restriction would tend to depreciate the value. I am giving my answer now entirely upon the question of value, as I said just now to the Chairman, not upon the question of policy.

8765. Consequently, such a proposal would in your opinion meet with a good deal of opposition from the trustees and beneficiaries?—I think so.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8766. You say that there is sometimes considerable local opposition to your letting your land for allotments?—Yes; we have found that sometimes, and indeed not infrequently, the trustees object to it.

8767. What class of people would object, generally?—The objections generally come from the trustees. In the case which I mentioned we had objections from the class of people to whom the allotments might be let, or at least a section of them; they were divided in opinion.

8768. That is a rare thing, is it not?—Yes. I cannot say it is common, in fact I do not at the moment remember another case.

8769. When you have excluded, by your certificate of exemption, land being cut up into allotments, you have still power to revoke the certificate of exemption, have you not?—Yes.

8770. And you have done so under local representation in some cases?—We have revoked the certificate in one or two cases, and we have under consideration one or two more cases, I think.

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Mr. *Holley Stewart*—continued.

8771. Have you lost any of the revenue to the charities through the letting out of your land in allotments?—No facts have come to my knowledge showing that.

8772. Where land was originally under a certificate of exemption and that certificate has been revoked, has that land depreciated in annual value?—I have no facts before me to show that; but any certificates that have been revoked, have been revoked so recently that probably there has hardly been time to show that.

8773. Have you any objection from the Charity Commissioners' point of view to an extension of the Allotments Act to five acres?—I do not see any objections.

8774. Would there be any objection to extending the Allotments Act to even 50 acres, so as to include small farms?—No, I think not. I do not think that the Charity Commissioners are concerned in that part of the policy. Parliament has declared that certain charity lands shall be let in a certain way, and after that it is a question of degree. The probability is that the larger the holding, that is, the larger the scope which the trustees have in choosing tenants, the better it would be for the charities.

Sir *Edward Birkbeck.*

8775. Can you tell the Committee what were the grounds of this petition that came from a certain quarter in the parish of which you spoke, asking that certain land should not be let for allotments?—They were afraid that the charity land would command less rent, and that as a result they, or the class to which they belonged, would receive a smaller benefit from the charity.

8776. But as a matter of fact, in your experience do not you find that the rents of allotments and small holdings are paid regularly?—Yes, I believe so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8777. Do you find that land let in allotments or in very small holdings brings in a higher rent than lands let to large farmers?—I have no particular experience as to that; but my general impression is that it is so.

8778. Is it not the case that at the present moment many glebe owners, and people with that class of property, are only too anxious to let land in allotments, because they get such good prices for them?—I should think so. I should say that in most cases you would be more likely to get a better rent by letting the land in allotments.

8779. Should you think that the same thing would apply to somewhat larger allotments of four, or five, or even eight, or 10 acres?—I have no experience to unable me to say.

8780. As regards the sale of land, in selling your land, do you generally offer it for sale in large plots, or do you split it up into a number of small plots, as many private landowners are doing now?—I should explain that the Charity Commissioners do not offer land for sale. Their province is to entertain applications from trustees. The trustees offer the land for sale in such a way as they think fit, and then we decide whether it is desirable or not. The trustees originate the proceedings, and our sanction is necessary for the sale.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

8781. Have you ever had occasion to suggest to trustees that, in the present state of things, they might more advantageously sell the land in small plots than in large plots?—I do not remember that we have. We generally take the advice of the surveyor in those matters. I do not think that any surveyor whom we have employed has advised that.

8782. Are you aware at the present moment that many landlords have tried the system of selling their land in small plots, rather than in large plots, in the belief that there is a demand for the small plots?—I have heard so.

8783. Are you aware whether the trustees of charity lands have in practice tried anything of that kind?—I do not remember to have heard of the trustees of a charity desiring to do that; but I am speaking only for myself, and I have under my charge mainly charities near London, and there may have been cases which I have not heard of, in which that has been done.

8784. Might there not be in that respect some disadvantage in a sale by trustees, as compared with a sale by a private owner, that a private owner might be willing to put himself about, and to try this method of selling land in small lots, though it might involve some trouble, whereas trustees are a body who would hardly undertake an enterprise of that kind, and who would be more likely to sell the land in large plots in the old-fashioned way?—Yes, I entertain that impression strongly. Trustees can never be so elastic in their management of land as private owners.

8785. Can you suggest any remedy?—Yes, I should like to make the same suggestion that I made before the Committee in 1884, which was based on the belief that trustees of charities (taking them broadly throughout the country) are by no means the best people to manage such a business (for it is a business) as letting land in small holdings or allotments; I therefore suggested that, following the policy of the Act of 1887, the best way of getting charity land let in allotments or small holdings would be to empower the trustees to let it to some body which would undertake the management of the business.

8786. In cases where there was likely to be a good local authority, do you think that might be the body to whom the duty might with advantage be entrusted?—I should think so.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8787. You said, in answer to a question by Mr. Lowther, that you have had one petition from one parish against letting charity land in allotments; is it the fact that you have had a number of petitions, correspondence, and other manifestations of the feeling of the people in favour of letting lands in allotments?—Certainly.

8788. May I take it that that feeling is almost general?—It is so.

8789. I think Mr. Lowther asked you whether or no charity lands were sold to the local authorities at a valuation for the purpose of small holdings, that would lessen the income of the charity; is it not the fact that from land let in small holdings (meaning by small holdings, holdings up to 40 or 50 acres) a larger rental is as a rule secured,

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

cured, than if it is let to a farmer as a portion of a large farm?—I suppose that is so; but the honourable Member's question, as I understood, was addressed to sales, not to letting. As regards letting, I should say that so far as my experience goes, you would get a higher rent; but as regards sales, it would all depend upon whether the sale was a forced sale or a restricted sale.

8790. Do you see any objection to a simple transfer of the duties of the trustees to a local authority, that is to say, making the local authority stand in the place of trustees to carry out the provisions of the charity?—Do you mean to carry out all the trusts of the charity?

8791. Yes, I mean to substitute the local authority for the present trustees of the charity; do you see any objection to that?—Yes, I always entertain a very strong objection to the administration of charities by a body constituted for any other purpose; I think you should have a body specially constituted for the purpose.

8792. You disagree, I understand, with the clause in the Allotments Act of 1887 which provides for handing over the charity lands to the local authorities?—No, I do not understand my answer to be in conflict with that; I do not understand that the local authority in that case is to administer the charity, and to give the income away, but it is to hire the land from the trustees, and to pay them a rent. The trustees are still to administer the charity, while the local authority having hired the land, is to let it in small holdings. I entirely approve of that.

8793. That clause is permissive at present; would you approve of making it compulsory. Would there be any difficulty in dealing with trustees if that clause were made compulsory, or do you think it would be to the general advantage of the charities and the localities?—I am here, of course, to safeguard the interests of the charities, and any provision that would compel trustees to let their land to one tenant, I think would be detrimental to the interests of charities. Of course it is for Parliament to say whether or not the interests of the charities are to suffer, and if Parliament lays down that principle, I see no difficulty in working it.

8794. What do you consider was the object of the Act of 1882?—In the first place, to extend the class entitled to the benefit of the previous Allotments Act, as the preamble states; and in the next place to compel the trustees of a certain class of charities to let their land in allotments so far as there was a demand for allotments, subject to certain safeguards provided by the later sections of the Act.

8795. And generally to increase the number of people who had an interest in the land in the locality in the form of having the right to rent a certain portion of it?—It would certainly increase the number of those who have a claim to rent the land.

8796. Then was not there a question raised as to whether the rights of the Charity Commissioners to sell that particular portion of the charity land, which existed under the Acts of 1853 and 1855, were superseded and taken away by the Act of 1882?—There was a question as to whether the Commissioners could properly give their sanction

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

to the sale. The question was raised in a case at Sutton, and it was decided that the Commissioners might give their sanction if they thought fit.

8797. That was the case of Sutton in Surrey, was it not?—Yes.

8798. That case was promoted by the Charity Commissioners, was it not; it was a sort of friendly action?—I do not think so; I have not looked at the case lately, but I do not think it was. The trustees were very anxious to sell, and objection was taken.

8799. The Charity Commissioners were acting on the decision of Mr. Justice Chitty on that occasion?—Yes.

8800. They had doubts as to their powers before that, I presume?—I do not think they had much doubt; but the question was raised, and therefore it was thought well to have it determined by a competent tribunal.

8801. They never gave their sanction to the sale of land coming under the Act of 1882 before that decision, did they?—I am not at all sure that we have not; I should think we had, but I am not at all sure about that.

8802. I should like the Committee to have the particulars of the decision in that case of the Sutton Trustees *v.* Church; would you have any objection to put in the particulars of that trial and decision?—That could be very readily done because it is a reported case. I have not the reference to it here, but I can send it to the Committee and then they will see the authentic report. I will put in the transcript of the whole report if the Committee would prefer to have that.

Chairman.

8803. Will you put in the transcript of the report as an appendix to your evidence, if you please?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8804. You said that you thought that charities were benefited by the sale of these properties which you have sanctioned?—I think the charities have been very largely benefited by the sale of their properties.

8805. I think the money is invested, is it not, in the two and three-quarter per cent.?—For the most part.

8806. How do you ascertain that the charities have been benefited?—When we have before us a proposal for a sale we look at the rent which the land fetches, and we take care, as we are bound by the Act to take care, that the result of the sale is that the charity gets more than it is getting at the time.

8807. You do not wish, I suppose, to convey that the charities would not be still more largely benefited if the land were let in small holdings, instead of in large farms, or ordinary sized farms?—I think very likely that the charity would get more rent. I am not speaking from my experience as a Charity Commissioner, but from my general impression, so far as my general knowledge goes.

8808. Then, rightly or wrongly, the result of these sales has been to let the land go into private hands, instead of into public hands?—

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

Yes, instead of into the hands of the trustees of the charity, so far as they are public hands.

8809. And then by putting it out of the power of the rural population, take the land in smaller quantities?—I should not admit that. The trustees of charity land might let it in small holdings, but I think that the trustees of charity land can never be expected to be so ready to let land in small holdings as private owners would be, and for this reason: trustees are unpaid officers, and, being human beings, you can scarcely expect them to be willing to adopt a course of transacting this business which would impose a very great additional burthen upon them.

8810. Whether it be right or wrong, so soon as the trustees have sold the land, there is no chance of the rural population taking it in either small or large quantities, as the case may be?—I should not say that. I understand that private owners are very ready to let land in small holdings.

8811. But I am referring to the particular land which the trustees have sold?—That particular land would be sold to private owners, and I do not understand that it is taken out of the market by being sold to them, because I understand the drivate owners are very ready to let land in small holdings.

Chairman.

8812. Your view, as I understand is, that a private owner would be more likely to let the land in small holdings than the trustees of a charity would be?—Yes, I think so.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8813. You referred to the Act of 1882 imposing on the Charity Commissioners the duty of seeing that the charity should sustain no loss; are you aware that the word "substantial" is put in before "loss" in Clause 4 of the Act of 1882?—Those words "substantial loss" are in a passage of that section which only deals with one particular case; it occurs in this passage, "It shall not be necessary for the trustees to set apart any portion of any such lands as aforesaid, the separation of which from the remainder of such lands not set apart for the time being may make it impossible to let such remainder without substantial loss to the charity." It is a question of the separation of one piece of land from another.

8814. The word "substantial" would modify the question of loss, would it not?—As regards that particular case it would certainly.

8815. Is it not the fact that these smaller men offer much higher rents than farmers would for land which is let on lease by the trustees?—I think in some cases they do.

8816. In that case the charity would suffer by the land being let to a farmer in bulk?—Yes, no doubt in that case if it is let to farmers it would be let at less than might be obtained for small holdings.

8817. Have you not a case before you at Mendlesham where the men are anxious, and have offered to give 30*s.* an acre, and where the trustees have let the land on lease at 20*s.* an acre?—I know that there is a case pending at Mendlesham in which we have had a good deal of trouble in dealing with the parties.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

8818. Would it not be in such a case the duty of the Charity Commissioners to prevent these two results, one the loss of income to the charity, and the other the loss of land to the labourers?—No. We do not conceive that it is our duty to interfere too minutely with the action of the trustees; it is difficult enough to control the trustees to the extent that we attempt to do it. We allow trustees very large discretion as to letting their land, and I think it would require a very strong case of letting at an under-value to cause us to interfere.

8819. Have not the Charity Commissioners the power under the penal clauses to prevent trustees from acting in that manner?—I do not think the penal clause (which is the 10th clause) applies directly to that. If any breach of the duty imposed by the Act is committed, that is to say, if the trustees refuse to let in allotments, we could compel them, certainly.

8820. Have the Charity Commissioners ever gone so far as to put that power in force?—I do not think we have ever gone so far as to put it in force; we have continually threatened it, with the best effect.

8821. As to the schemes under the Act, Section 14 of the Act directs the Charity Commissioners to provide for allotments under any new scheme; do the Charity Commissioners put that clause in force in their new schemes?—Yes, we do; we insert that clause in every scheme which we make. Soon after the Act was passed there were a few cases, as the honourable Member knows, as they were mentioned before the Committee in 1884, in which by inadvertence the clause had not been put in; but now in every scheme we make that clause is put in.

8822. Is there no intention of correcting the omission with regard to the 10 or 12 cases in which the Commissioners have made that omission?—We cannot correct it except upon an application by the trustees; we have no power otherwise.

8823. In cases where a sale has been sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners, has the will of the people in the locality, by inquiry or otherwise, ever been asked?—It is very rarely indeed that we sanction a sale without giving public notice, and we frequently elicit most useful objections and suggestions by that means. Sometimes sales which would have been very improper have been stopped in that way.

8824. I notice by the Report that you have made 246 orders sanctioning the sale of real estate; can you tell us how much of that was agricultural land?—I cannot, off-hand.

8825. May we take it that a considerable portion of it was?—Yes, a very considerable portion of it.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

8826. May I ask how much land you have sold under these schemes altogether, roughly?—I am afraid I have not got the figures: I do not know that we could give them without going through every order made in the last seven-and-thirty years; it would come to a very considerable amount. The land is not generally sold in large parcels, but there have been, of course,

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

course, some thousands of sales, and, therefore, the amount must be considerable.

8827. Have you had any protests against that policy from the localties?—Very seldom indeed; sometimes we have. We have had more protests, of course, since the Allotments Act.

8828. Do you mean the Act of 1882, or the Act of 1887?—The Act of 1882. In some cases sales which would have been otherwise sanctioned have not been sanctioned in consequence of representations in connection with the Allotments Act.

8829. I suppose that those protests have been based to a very large extent upon the objection to turning these public lands into private land?—The objection was, I think, that the parties objecting had a right to have this land let, and they did not want to have the land sold so that they would have to go to ask to have the land let instead of claiming to have it let as a right.

8830. That is to say, the public rights would cease?—Yes.

8831. Under the Allotments Act of 1887 you have in some instances, I believe, allowed charity land to be leased to the rural sanitary authority?—I do not think that we have had a case of that sort brought to a completion yet; we have had very few cases; one, two, or three.

8832. You see no objection to the rural sanitary authority taking the land for that purpose?—No, if they give full value for it.

8833. Of course that would be a matter of bargain between the trustees, supported by the Charity Commissioners, and the local sanitary authority?—Yes, as the Act now stands, that would be so. We are charged with the duty of seeing that a proper price is paid.

8834. The rural sanitary authorities in that case you think would be suitable bodies for taking these charity lands for the purpose of small holdings, supposing you had an extension of that principle?—I am not very well fitted to give an opinion as to that; Parliament has said they are a proper body, and I do not wish to quarrel with an opinion so expressed.

8835. If they are the proper bodies to lease the land for the purpose of allotments you see no objection to allowing them to lease larger allotments than allotments of one acre?—Not at all.

8836. You say that there is a difficulty about charity trustees parcelling out charity lands for small holdings, and that they are not so likely to do it as private owners?—I think not.

8837. Do you mean that their constitution is not calculated to make them do so?—I will not say that; I do not think that any charity trustees, however constituted are (speaking of the trustees broadly, throughout the whole of England), likely to adopt a very onerous course of management of land. You may of course get a particular body of trustees actuated by generous motives who would undertake that, but in forming my opinion I have to consider all the bodies of trustees throughout England, and I do not think that you would find them generally likely to adopt such a course.

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

8838. Supposing that you have elective trustees, elected by a sufficiently large constituency to do the work would they not be more likely to undertake that duty?—I suppose they would be more susceptible to the wishes of those who wanted to take the land in allotments.

8839. If there was a great public demand or desire for this land to be let in small allotments, if you had elective trustees, or a certain number of the trustees were elective, you would be more likely to have it carried out under such a body, would you not?—Yes. I think it is most important to have that elective element to let daylight into the constitution of trustees.

Mr. *Lowther.*

8840. With regard to a great deal of this charity land, is not the history of it this: that some benevolent testator has impressed part of his estate with a charitable trust which thereupon becomes charity land, that land very often being situated in the centre of the estate, or at all events surrounded by land belonging to the original founder. Does not that land often get sold to the founder's successors at a very much increased rate above its agricultural value, simply because it happens to be situated in the centre of that man's estate, or surrounded by land of his?—Yes, that is quite the case. A very large proportion of these sales are sales made at a price very far above the ordinary market value of the piece of land in consideration of their accommodation value to adjoining owners. In many cases it happens that the predecessor of an adjoining owner has separated a particular field from his estate, and it becomes of great importance to the present representative of the estate to get it back, and he has to pay very highly for it.

8841. He would give a very much more enhanced price for it than a local authority or any other purchaser would, I presume?—I should think so, because the local authority could go and buy a field anywhere.

Mr. PERCIVAL BIRKETT, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

8842. I THINK you are solicitor to the Commons Preservation Society?—Yes.

8843. And to some other kindred associations, chiefly for the preservation of open spaces?—Yes.

8844. Have you made a special study of the origin of the rights and position of small owners in connection with commons?—I have for the last 12 years in my work amongst commoners, and in regard to the preservation of commons.

Chairman—continued.

8845. What is your general opinion as to the value of commons in connection with the creation and maintenance of small holdings?—My experience under that head has been this: that in all cases where a question arises on some encroachment or inclosure of a common, it is invaribly the small

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Chairman—continued.

holder, whether owning or occupying, who is the first to complain; and directly you go into a locality you will meet with large numbers of these persons who look upon these rights and the enjoyment of them with the greatest possible jealousy.

8846. You infer the value of them from the interest which the owners of these rights take in their preservation?—Exactly. I could give you very shortly quite a recent case in my experience showing how these people take an interest in these rights. In Devonshire, at Great Torrington, there has been for a very long time considerable discussion as to the rights of the owners of the soil and the commoners. They asked me to go down there, and without any preparation at all; I merely let them know I was coming down, as I put it in my letter, to see one or two of them in order to understand the matter. In the afternoon they simply sent a man round announcing the fact that I was coming down, and in the evening I had a packed meeting of between 400 or 500 people, and all of the smaller class; there were, I believe, no large farmers at all.

8847. Now can you give us a list of the rights of common to which you have been referring; what are the true rights of common?—The true rights of common as known to the law, so to speak, are the right of pasturage and the right of estovers, including in the term estovers the right to take fern and heath for litter, and underwood, gorse, and so on, for the repair of fences, and stack bottoms, and that kind of thing.

8848. Ordinary estovers being of wood for fuel, for buildings and repairs of houses, and so on?—The term popularly has been used chiefly with regard to fuel, but estovers included, to use a popular expression in Devonshire, "all that might do them good from the wastes."

8849. Then there are rights of quarrying or taking stone are there not?—In some cases we do find the right reserved of taking stone for repairing buildings, sheds, and farmhouses, and so on; but I should not say that that right was a very general right. The owner of the soil generally makes a good claim to the minerals.

8850. Does that exhaust the rights to which you wish to refer?—Beyond what I have suggested as the strict legal rights, there are other rights which the courts of law at present will recognise when they are shown to have been enjoyed for a very long period, when they are claimed by what we call prescription. Under that head you will be able to find that rights of common are exercised in respect of depasturing donkeys, and poultry generally; and in fact taking anything whatever the commoners can find on the commons.

8851. Those being the rights of common, would you now define for us what are commonable lands?—The commonable lands in the first instance are what are known as commons: that is the common waste land one finds very frequently in a parish. Then in addition to those there are the common fields; that is, those lands which are cultivated during one half of the year, and thrown open to the depasturage of the commoners' cattle for the remainder; the open or commonable period generally being from harvest to seed time. Those common fields are very frequently met with, but they are rapidly dying out. Then another branch of common land are what are called Lammas meadows. Those are lands laid down to grass and always kept in grass, the owner of the land being entitled to take the hay crop, and the land being thrown open to the commoners after Lammas day, which is now the 13th of August. Then, in addition to that, you will find in the North of England more especially what are called cattle gates, which are the right to put on a certain number of beasts. It is a right not in relation to the capacity of the commonable tenement, but it is a separate right, which can pass by deed. It is sometimes called common in gross.

8852. Dealing with the first of those, the ordinary common, to whom are the rights of common available?—All rights of common according to the old law, as distinguished from the more modern prescriptive rights I mentioned just now, all ancient rights of pasturage are, strictly speaking, exerciseable in respect of land, and all estovers for fuel in respect of ancient tenements. As a rule the freehold and copyhold tenants of a manor are generally supposed to be the only persons entitled to rights of common; but I have found, as a matter of fact, that manor boundaries are not very much respected. Very often the manor will be stated to be only part of a parish; and yet it is invariably the case that every owner and occupier of land in the parish exercises the rights; whether that points to rights existing at an earlier state of the manor or not, of course is a matter in each case for investigation.

8853. I suppose parishioners who are not upon the roll obtain a prescriptive right?—It is quite competent for them to set up a prescriptive right.

8854. Then as regards the second class; that is, common fields and Lammas lands, to whom do those rights belong?—There it is very much the same. Very often the allegation would be made by the owner of the manor, that only persons holding under the manor are entitled to this right; but I do not think there is much doubt now from an historical point of view, that all these rights in respect of common fields and Lammas lands, are of a wider nature, and are traceable to the time when the village, or vill, or township, or whatever it may be, was the unit, so to speak, of jurisdiction, so that everybody in the parish is entitled to use the pasturage on common fields.

8855. Then coming to the third class, the gated or stinted land, by whom are those rights exercised?—Those will be exercised by persons owing the cattle gate or stint.

8856. The rights there are limited?—Yes, and they are not necessarily enjoyable in respect of a tenement.

8157. Then as to the ownership of the soil in respect of these commons, what have you to say?—The commonable waste lands of the manor, are generally vested as to the soil in the lord; it is competent for him to sell his ownership in this waste to different persons, as he thinks fit, subject

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Chairman—continued.

subject to the rights of the commoners. In large tracts of waste, which we find now and then in forests, the ownership differs very considerably. And to explain that I must, if you will allow me, refer to one or two of the principal forests which will be known to this Committee. In Epping Forest the whole of the soil is divided amongst the lords of the different manors, the Crown having merely a forestal right over it. In the New Forest the soil is nearly all vested in the Crown. In Dartmoor, which is the relic of a forest, the Duchy of Cornwall has a very large central portion of the soil vested in it; and the surrounding commons, which are called the commons of Devon, are vested in the lords of the manor. Then the Epping rule prevails at Malvern Hills, which was a forest, and at Ashdown Forest it was so till the inclosure. There are some other remains of Crown forests which are not existing at the present day, in which the Crown had the soil.

8858. What are the rights or interests of owner in these cases?—Very limited indeed; the owner of the soil, by virtue of his ownership, has the right of depasturing these wastes concurrently with the commoners; and he has a right to take the minerals and the timber; but it is well recognised now by the courts that the lord has only, so to speak, the surplusage; he cannot inclose any piece at all. The onus is upon him, so that he cannot inclose at all without showing that the commoners have sufficient pasturage. With regard to digging minerals, if the commoners can show that they have not sufficient, he cannot touch the wastes; but the onus in that case is upon the commoners. The timber, of course, he can take as he pleases.

8859. In your opinion the rights of the commoners are paramount, and are more important than the rights of the lord?—Certainly; and that can be illustrated very simply in this way: that on inclosure the lord's interest is generally put at something between a twelfth and an eighteenth, while the commoners get the remainder.

8860. As regards the other lands which you have spoken of, lammas lands and gated lands, by whom are they held?—Lammas lands are divided, as a rule, between a number of owners; they are not manorial in their ownership. The lord does not have the ownership of the soil in them by virtue of his being the lord of the manor; although, of course, he may own land in common fields in the same way as any other person. The gated rights are rights of common; they have nothing to do with land. The stint or cattle-gate may be owned over another person's land. They are not necessarily in connection with the manor. Those cattle-gates are mostly found in the northern counties, Westmorland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire.

8861. Have you any information as to the class of persons who are the principal owners and users of these common rights?—I must divide that question as between the owners and users. The owner of the common rights may be anybody; it may be the largest landowner in the parish or the smallest. But speaking of the user of the rights at the present day, they are chiefly used by the small people. A man who cultivates land in a large farm does not put out, as a matter of general practice, his stock upon the common; either they are looked upon as too valuable, or he has sufficient land at home.

8862. Under those circumstances is the effect of inclosure to injure and destroy the small holders?—In my opinion it does very largely affect the interest of the small holders.

8863. That is to say, it deprives them of the advantages which are almost essential to the prosperity of a small holder?—Yes; that is the result of my own investigations. I cannot refer to statistics, but wherever I go I ask these men whether it is of any value to them to have this turn out, and they invariably say yes, and that they cannot make two or three acres or so pay unless they can get something else besides. There is another point with regard to the subject of inclosure which I should like to state. It came out in some correspondence which took place some years ago between you, Sir, and Lord Bramwell in the newspapers, and it exactly hit the point, which was this: that whereas the small owner may not be connected with a manor, and perhaps not able (to put the case at the lowest) to prove a true prescriptive right so long as the common existed, he would, as a matter of fact, utilise it; he would either turn out a donkey or a cow on it, or run poultry there, or take fuel, and so on, although perhaps his house would be owned by the lord of the manor On inclosure every one of those rights ceased, and this individual will not be compensated. If any compensation at all is given for the cottage it will go to the landlord and not to the tenant.

8864. Therefore upon inclosure there would be a class of persons who, rightly or wrongly, legally or illegally, have enjoyed the benefits of common who would not obtain any compensation?—Exactly.

8865. If the use of those rights have enabled or assisted such men to be small holders, when those rights were taken away the probability is that they would cease to occupy that position?—In my opinion, certainly, that would be so. They would either be absorbed in large farms, or a man would not be able to benefit himself by produce by one way or another as he could before.

8866. We have been told that when a common is inclosed, in many cases, a number of new small owners are created by the inclosure; that is to say, that they are compensated by land which they own as freehold for the rights which they have hitherto enjoyed; is that so, in your opinion?—I think that must be wrong, for this simple reason, that on inclosure only the persons entitled to lands with rights get allotments; they only get their allotments in respect of land which they already occupy. Assuming there are 20 owners, the land is divided in 20 portions. I cannot possibly see how the inclosure can increase the number.

8867. Do you mean to say that everyone who obtains an allotment or an inclosure must already be a landowner?—Certainly.

8868. But are there not persons who were not at the time landowners who yet, having commonable rights, might be made landowners under the inclosure?—I do not think I ever heard of such a thing; such a man could not prove his right.

8869. Then, in your opinion, an inclosure could

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Chairman—continued.

could not increase the number of small owners?—Not at the time of the inclosure. Of course I do not refer to the possibilities of the subdivision of allotted land subsequently, but at the actual date of inclosure I cannot see how it could possibly increase the number of small owners.

8870. I ought to have confined my questions, in the first instance, to the effect of compensation; is the effect of the compensation given to increase the number of landowners?—I should say, certainly not.

8871. We were told that in some cases a portion of common land is sold to pay expenses, and that such land has been sold again and again to a very large number of small owners who have thereby been created?—That may have happened, but I cannot bring myself to say that that is the effect of inclosure.

8872. Some witnesses, I think, have given us actual cases of inclosures where the number of landowners after the inclosure was completed was increased in the district by the inclosure?—I see the point, and a case is recalled to my mind (now that you put it in that way), in Hampshire, where, undoubtedly, there is a little settlement of that description, but I do not think that it is quite fair to say that that is the result of inclosure. It is a case very much in the same position as where a man says, I will sell my estate and divide it up. If the lord of the manor, or anybody else, had chosen to pay the whole of the expenses of inclosure it could not possibly have happened.

8873. No; but we are told, as a matter of fact, it has happened, and therefore may it not be suggested that it is untrue to say that the effect of inclosure generally has been to reduce the number of small owners, seeing that it has directly increased the number in this way; of course you will understand that I am putting the suggestion to you for any observation you may wish to make upon it?—Putting it in that way it is just possible that there has been some increase, but I should say that that had not at all equalled in effect the destruction which has taken place in other ways. The evidence I have upon that point I can put in this way: that if you look back to the old surveys of manors you will find the land very much more subdivided in the early years; for instance, in the 16th century than at the present day.

8874. I understand that, whatever may be the fact with regard to the creation of small owners, you would say that the prospect of their survival is very much lessened by the inclosures?—Yes.

8875. Which takes away from all of them those rights which are almost essential to the success of small holdings?—I think so. Of course there is another point as regards the question of the purchase of land sold to meet the expenses. In nearly all these settlements the holdings of a number of owners would be found to be excessively small; not what to my mind is properly meant by small holdings; they would be simply a cottage and a rood of land, or something of that sort. The instance I have in my mind is entirely of that character; then, of course, there would be no common left, and the men would not have the means of increasing their income by resorting to the common.

Chairman—continued.

8876. If your view is correct, we should expect to find, should we not, that the largest proportion of small ownerships would be found near commons?—Yes.

8877. Because, I presume, you would say they would have a less chance of success away from commons?—Quite so.

8878. Is it the case that the largest proportion is found near commons?—So far as my own experience goes it is so, especially in the neighbourhood of the New Forest and Dartmoor. One of my clients, Mr. Briscoe Eyre, is a gentleman who takes an enormous interest in the neighbourhood of the New Forest, and he asks me to state that, if his evidence would be of any use at all, he would be very happy to come and give the actual results of his observations. He has sent me a pamphlet which he wrote on the subject of "Common Rights and Cottage Stock Keepers in the New Forest," which I will hand in to the Committee. He is not very well just now, but he says that, if it is useful to the Committee, he will take some trouble to work up some more details. If the Committee care to hear what he says, I will just read one sentence.

8879. Perhaps you would summarise the conclusion at which he arrives?—He says: "It has been shown that not only can the commoners make a reasonable provision against illness and old age, but that the modest savings, which might not outlast the long and hale old age of this healthy region if applied to daily necessities, is invested in stock-keeping, and so made to produce a fairly steady and sufficient pittance." Then he quotes a case upon the very point you have just put to me: "A typical parish may be taken from the nine parishes of the New Forest Union, which embrace the eastern and larger half of the district under review. The half-yearly return (to Michaelmas 1881) for Bramshaw, a typical parish as to size and position, containing 823 souls, and surrounded by the wastes of the forest and wastes of the manors, shows that it has only three indoor and eleven outdoor paupers, and an expenditure of 46 *l.* a year;" and then he quotes other cases. He then gives six cases where quite small individuals, in the matter of money, have raised themselves to become virtually large farmers. Those are cases where a man starting with simply one cow and a small paddock, or less than a paddock, and running his cow or his pig, or whatever it may be, in the New Forest, has in that way been able to save, and is now quite a large farmer. I do not say that they have become owners, but large farmers.

8880. We have had evidence as to the extent of the inclosures which have been made both by public Acts of Parliament and by private Acts; those inclosures, you say, are generally unpopular with the small commoners?—Yes, very much so.

8881. Under those circumstances, why do they fail to resist them?—They have not the means. A lord of the manor, very often, indeed I suppose I may say generally, is a wealthy man, and can afford to fight a heavy law suit. These common cases are excessively heavy cases, and a small man cannot possibly afford to fight them; and

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Chairman—continued.

and he has simply to give way from sheer weight of wealth, for that is what it comes to.

8882. Do you think if it were not for the expense which interferes with their raising their case, the case of the commoners would be more frequently taken up, and successfully taken up?—I can say that the evidence of that is simply this: that in no case that I am aware of, which has been properly fought out, have the commoners failed. There may have been cases I know nothing about: but of those cases which I am aware of, as I say, there has been no case properly fought out in which the commoners have not succeeded in recent days. Beginning with the Berkhampstead case in 1865, down to the present day, there have been no failures at all.

8883. You think the compensation that is given to commoners is unsatisfactory where an inclosure takes place?—I do not know what particular point of view your question refers to.

8884. We are, of course, dealing with the question of small holdings. Where a small holder having a right of common is compensated under an Inclosure Act, do you think that he is in as favourable a position as if the inclosure had not taken place?—A small holder will only get a very small proportion of common, and, judging from the evidence which I have collected myself, and heard given in courts of law, a small area of land, added to a further small holding, is not of the same value as an extensive run over a large area. There are many things besides the feed, as I understand from commoners, which are valuable in a common. The cattle get more ground for drying upon in wet weather, and the actual roaming about is looked upon as a valuable thing for the beasts, especially if they are high-bred stock. We had a case the other day in which a farmer brought that forward very strongly.

8885. Now I should like to ask you what you would think of a proposal that future inclosures should have special regard to the creation of small holdings; do you think that that would be a beneficial thing?—My own opinion is that inclosures of existing common land ought not in future to take place even for the purpose of creating small holdings.

8886. Your view, as I understand is, that in every case where a common is now uninclosed it should remain so, and all inclosures should be prohibited?—Speaking generally, yes. I do not wish to pin myself down as to every single common in England; the Committee may have some special case in their minds, but speaking generally, I should say that all inclosures in future ought to be stopped.

8887. Do you say that because you think inclosure has gone far enough, or because you would have been opposed to inclosures altogether from the first?—No, I think inclosures to a certain extent have been beneficial, especially of common fields; I think that was unquestionably a most wasteful way of holding land. But I am not at all prepared to say that the enormous inclosures that have taken place throughout England have been beneficial.

8888. I suppose that some millions of acres have been brought into cultivation by inclosures made during the last hundred years?—Yes; 7,000,000 acres, I think it is.

Chairman—continued.

8889. Would you be prepared to say that that addition to the cultivable land of the country did not compensate for the injury done to the commoners or to the small holders?—I am afraid that I could not answer that question; it is too wide a subject for me; I have not gone into it from a statesman's point of view.

8890. Perhaps I am right in supposing that you have considered chiefly the injury which inclosure does to certain classes, and that you have not thought it necessary to weigh as against that the benefits which may have resulted to other people or to the community at large?—Yes; I think that is a fair way to put it. I have not been in a position to form an opinion whether, taking the whole country, it would be beneficial to inclose these commons, or the remainder of the commons, for the purpose of creating small holdings. All I say is this, that there is an existing large class of small holders who will certainly cease to exist if you inclose the commons.

8891. Your view, then, is that if additional small holdings are to be created, they should be carved out of other land and not out of commons?—Yes; there is ample land round these commons at the present day which can be carved out into small holdings; and without trenching upon subjects which are not before the Committee too much, without going into the theory of open spaces, I should like to say that common land has a double use, and that if you do take away the commons you take away the value they have as open spaces. How far that is valuable I understand is not inquired into by this Committee.

8892. Confining ourselves strictly to our subject, I think I may summarise your evidence in this way, may I not: In the first place, you are of opinion that past inclosures have tended to reduce the number of small holdings?—Yes.

8893. And that further inclosures would tend still further in the same direction?—Yes.

8894. Under those circumstance I presume you would agree with the opinion that the class of small cultivators have some claim upon the Legislature in consequence of the way in which they have suffered from previous inclosures?—Certainly.

8895. But you would say that that claim should take the form of a demand for other land, and not for commonable land, which should always remain?—Certainly. I can put it in this way: I think some of the land already inclosed should be put back to small holding purposes, and that we ought not to take existing commons for the creation of that class of holdings.

8896. In connection with the proposal to create small holdings, have you considered the question of the creation of co-operative farms, as contrasted with individual ownership or tenancy?—No, I have not.

8897. But have you considered whether it would be desirable in connection with small holdings to associate with them a large tract to be held in common pasturage?—Yes, I think it is a question which must be considered in dealing with the creation of small holdings, whether, given a tract of land, the whole of it should be cut up into

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Chairman—continued.

into farms entire in themselves (that is a portion of arable and a portion of pasturage), or whether they should not be cut up into farms of small size leaving a fair proportion of the tract as commonage so as to go back partly to the old system; my own views are certainly that you would find that the locality would prefer the system by which they would get commonage.

8898. I propose now to take you briefly through the heads of reference which have been submitted to this Committee. In your opinion what facilities are there existing for the creation of small holdings; are there any special facilities?—There is nothing special.

8899. Do you think that the local authority could be introduced in order to create small holdings?—Of course that is an exceedingly wide question, especially to anybody in my position; but it seems to me that if you let a local authority become a great landowner there is a difficulty which is sure to have to be faced, namely, the question of what I may call jobbery. And there is also this point. If you are going to have the local authority as a landowner, merely letting the land in small holdings, I do not understand why the present landowners should not do it just as well. I know many landowners are in the present day perfectly willing to let their land in small holdings; but I am bound to say that I do not profess to have studied that question with any great degree of accuracy; I have chiefly given my attention to the question of the rights of common.

8900. Are you acquainted with the working of local authorities in this country?—I live under one, and I have a good deal to do with them in other ways.

8901. May I ask are you acquainted with the working of the great provincial corporations, which are probably the best form of local government?—No.

8902. Are you not aware that in many cases they are large landowners already?—Certainly they are for certain purposes, but I do not think that they are large farmers.

8903. Some of them hold large quantities of agricultural land, do they not?—For sewage farms and that sort of thing.

8904. And in some cases for occupation?—I was not aware of that.

8905. Has not Nottingham a considerable property of that kind?—I am not aware of the fact.

8906. Have you ever heard any accusation suggested of jobbery or corruption in connection with the management of these estates by provincial corporations?—No, I cannot say I have.

8907. Therefore it is rather a theoretical objection than a practical objection which you take to the intervention of the local authorities in such a matter?—I should be extremely loth to name any particular body which in my opinion would be open to such a charge, and I do not intend to make such a charge against any corporation. I know perfectly well from what I have had to do with local authorities that there is virtually what some people call a job on almost every negotiation that takes place; I do not say in an unfair way, but any scheme that has to be taken up by the local authority it takes three or four months to get them to take it up to begin with.

Chairman—continued.

8908. You cannot give us any case that we can follow up to test the general opinion you have expressed?—No; I should not like to do it.

8909. Do your observations apply to local authorities which are popularly elected in the same way in which the great corporations are to which I have already referred?—Yes.

8910. Or do you refer only to bodies like local boards or district boards elected under a different system?—But they are popularly elected.

8911. But they are not elected by the householders, are they?—They are elected by the ratepayers.

8912. The district boards and local boards are invariably elected, are they not, by the owners and occupiers under the Sturgis-Bourne Act?—They are elected under the Public Health Act of 1875.

8913. Which practically repeals the clauses of the Sturgis-Bourne Act which give the multiple vote to property, is not that so?—Yes.

8914. Are the bodies of which you entertain the unfavourable opinion you have expressed, elected under that system or like the Town Council of Manchester, for instance, by the vote of every ratepayer?—One notable case in my mind is the Report presented to Parliament in the case of the Metropolitan Board of Works; that is a popularly elected body. I do not mean the Board of Works, but the vestries who sent the members to the Board.

8915. Is a London vestry your ideal of a popularly elected body?—I do not say it is altogether; not of a rightly elected body.

8916. Perhaps I am not wrong in supposing that your experience has been largely in connection with metropolitan local life, about which great complaints have notoriously been made?—As I said before, I have no particular case which I can put before the Committee on this particular point. I have travelled over England a good deal in connection with this matter of commons, and the invariable cry, if I suggest why do you not do this thing or the other thing by your local board, is, "For goodness sake do not let us have anything to do with them." Only the other day I suggested placing a large common, which unquestionably in my mind ought to have gone into the hands of a corporation (I think it was a corporation in that case), and the suggestion was howled at; they would not hear of it.

8917. Was it at a public meeting that your suggestion was repudiated in that way, or only by persons to whom you privately communicated it?—It was at largish meeting of people; I do not say that it was a public meeting to which the question was submitted.

8918. I understand that you think that so far as your experience goes a local authority would be a very unpopular body for conducting such an enterprise as the creation of small holdings?—The question was not put to me quite in that way: I said that I did not like the idea of a local authority being a great landowner of small holdings.

8919. How would you provide small holdings; I assume you think that it is desirable to create them?—That I cannot form an opinion upon. In the notes of my evidence, which I have made out,

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Chairman—continued.

out, I have assumed, for the sake of argument, that it is recognised by everybody that small holdings are desirable. That is a question which certainly I am not in a position to advise this Committee upon; it is a great State question, to my mind. I am not prepared to say that it would not be advisable, but I do not think that I could usefully give my opinion upon the subject.

8920. Assuming it is desirable to create small holdings, have you considered how they could best be created?—No, I cannot say that I have.

8921. You have not given special attention to that branch of the subject?—No, I have not.

Mr. *Seale-Hayne.*

8922. With regard to what you said just now as to corporations holding and jobbing land, is it not the fact that many old corporations, such as old borough and other corporations, do hold considerable estates in various parts?—Yes, I have heard of them holding lands, and sometimes large amounts of land.

8923. Has the management of those lands, so far as you know, been satisfactory?—I do not think that I could answer that question; I could not give facts.

8924. Taking the various charity lands in various parts of England, have not the Charity Commissioners been principally established for the purpose of putting an end to the jobbery with which those lands were managed?—I have heard that stated. The Charity Commissioners were established a long time ago; but I have always understood that they were a sort of guardians of the public interests in the charity lands.

8925. Have you any opinion as to the probable effect of the Settled Land Act as being favourable to distribution of land?—Yes, in this way: that the Settled Land Acts have given power to tenants for life and trustees to sell, which they did not possess before. The tendency will be, no doubt, to distribute land in that way by ordinary sale.

8926. In your experience as a solicitor, do you think it likely that the holders of land would exercise the powers of that Act for the purpose of selling in small portions?—I think where there is a wealthy tenant for life who does not wish to immediately increase his income, the probability is that he would maintain the entail and would not sell; but of course there are cases where a man wishes to improve his income by getting rid of his land, and investing the proceeds in ordinary stock; and such people are more likely to sell than a very wealthy landowner, who, as I say, would maintain the entail or settlement, whatever it may be.

8927. Do you not think that as part of any scheme for increasing the facilities for the distribution of land, it would be necessary to have registration of title; I do not mean registration of deeds only, but registration of title in the larger sense?—Do you mean what is popularly called registration of land?

8928. Yes?—That may or may not facilitate the transfer of land; I think it is very difficult indeed to answer that question; the difficulty to

Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

my mind being this: that you cannot very easily identify the land in England. If the land were cut up afresh into square blocks there would not be the same difficulty; but when you have questions arising as to who owns a ditch, or half a ditch, and so on, it becomes excessively difficult to bring a satisfactory identification about.

8929. In connection with the modern Ordnance surveys, could not that difficulty be remedied?—If the Ordnance survey map was made evidence, and was adopted as the basis of registration, I think it might facilitate it very much.

8930. Are you acquainted with the system of transfer of land in some of our colonies and in America?—No. I might just add this to what I said about registration: In comparing the present system of registration of land and transfer by registration with the facilities which exist for the transfer of stock, it must be borne in mind that where a man is buying 100 *l.* worth of stock he does not care which particular 100 *l.* worth he gets as long as he gets his money's worth; but a man buying a farm of course, wants the particular farm he has set his mind upon, and it must be identified, that is the difficulty.

8931. I presume you consider our system of tying up land in settlements prevents the distribution of land?—Yes, I certainly think that.

8932. And also primogeniture and entail?—Yes, that all tends to aggregation in my mind very largely.

8933. You have given evidence of opinion as regards the diminution of small owners and cultivators of land at the present time; do you consider that, relatively to the population at the present time, the number of small holders is greater or less than, say, 100 years ago relatively to the population at that time?—I should say certainly, putting it in that way; the number of small holders is less; but it is fair to the Committee to say that I cannot point to statistics to prove that.

8934. You mentioned just now that in old manor surveys it was evident that the holders of land were more numerous in former times than at the present time?—Yes.

8935. You gave distinct evidence as to that?—Yes. In old surveys you would find a very much larger number of persons holding farms of from five to 10 acres, and from 10 to 20 acres.

8936. Having regard to past legislation, which has tended to aggregation of land in the hands of a few, what is your opinion of the effect of the Statute of 1660, which abolished feudal tenures?—I think, speaking generally, that after that Act the tendency was to aggregate. It is rather technical, but I think there was this reason for it, that before 1660, when feudal tenures were in existence, the lord of the manor was, so to speak, the owner of very large tracts of land, of which he had no power of occupation; he had the right of escheat, as it is called. If the feudal tenant failed to perform his duties or services, the land escheated to him; and he had a hold over it in that way; but after that right was abolished by the Act of 1660, of course he had to become actually possessed of land. His ownership could not depend upon the payment of small quit-rents, or the performance of military duties; and after that time, so far as I

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Mr. *Seale-Hayne*—continued.

can form any opinion, aggregation did go on faster; estates were much more largely bought *en bloc.*

8937. I think you also entertain the opinion that the Statute of Merton enabling the lord of the manor to inclose commons has had a great effect in recent times in encouraging illegal inclosures?—I think if the Statute of Merton had been wiped off the Statute Book at an early date a great deal of trouble that has taken place between lords and commoners would never have arisen. In every case of inclosure that is contested the lord of the manor says, first of all, "there is plenty of waste left; "I have approved this waste under the Statute "of Merton." That of course in most cases has no foundation at all in fact; he has not considered the point at all before he begins the inclosure.

8938. What in your opinion is the effect of the Statute De Donis of Edward I.?—That is the Act providing for the entailing of property; and the first of the Acts which enabled this great aggregation to take place.

8939. That was a Statute that greatly favoured aggregation of land, was it not?—Certainly. I should like to say as regards the Statute of Merton, that a Select Committee of the House of Commons has twice already recommended its repeal, in 1865 and 1866, I think.

8940. It amounts to this, does it not, that the present aggregation of land in the hands of a few is an artificial state of things created by law?—Yes; I suppose I must say that is so. All tenure of land is artificial in that sense.

8941. Perhaps you do not follow me exactly. We have now touched upon certain Statutes which in your opinion have tended towards the aggregation of land. Those Statutes are artificial, and consequently the present tendency of land to aggregate in the hands of a few is an artificial and not a natural state of things; is not that so?—It is artificial in the sense that it is the result of legislation in early days.

8942. As a solicitor, what is your opinion of the effect of the power of mortgaging for specific debts, having special regard to its effect on the distribution of land; do you consider that it is an impediment to distribution or not?—Mortgaging is not an impediment I should say. I forget what the proportion is, but the bulk, at any rate, of land in this country is mortgaged; and I should say that the greater proportion of small people in point of wealth do mortgage their lands as soon as they are bought. They generally look to mortgaging to provide part of the purchase money.

8943. But my object was to obtain your opinion as to the effect of this power of mortgaging upon the distribution of land and breaking it up into small lots; do you think that it tends to break up land or not?—In that way I think it assists the breaking up of land; you must, first of all, have your land available for purchasing; but I think if the land is available you would get a greater number of persons willing to buy with a power of mortgaging than you would if you took away the power of mortgaging.

8944. Take the case of a mortgaged estate where a man is a landowner and not a capitalist; supposing he wants to improve that land what is the effect of that mortgage upon the estate on his power of raising money; will he be able readily to sell a portion of it?—I do not think it makes any difference. You mean perhaps it might be an impediment in this way: that if one large estate is subject to a mortgage there might be difficulty in the way of the mortgagee consenting to sell part and releasing part. I suppose it would be a certain amount of impediment in that way; I do not think it would be very much of an impediment in the present day; but it would be an impediment, no doubt.

8945. A man who has mortgaged his estate is not in the same position as regards raising money by the sale of a portion of it as a man would be without a mortgage, is he?—I cannot say that he is absolutely.

8946. Did you know the late Mr. Joseph Kay, the Queen's Counsel?—I had not the pleasure of his acquaintance.

8947. You do not know his book upon the land question and opinion upon that subject?—No.

8948. I understand you are acquainted with the small holders round Dartmoor?—I have been amongst them when I was investigating the rights on Dartmoor.

8949. What is your opinion as to their condition, are they a flourishing class or not?—Very, I should say; and they are excessively independent. The small holders in Devonshire are the most independent persons I ever came across; they are extraordinarily independent.

8950. You have no statistics as to pauperism in those parishes, have you?—No, I wanted very much to obtain statistics upon that head, but I am afraid my notice was rather too short. I cannot but think that they would work out satisfactorily for my point of view; and that would find less pauperism in parishes bordering on big tracts of commonable land than you would on purely agricultural inclosed land.

8951. From what you know of the villages where you find these small holders, you would say that they are a flourishing agricultural class, would you not?—So far as my experience goes certainly. I have not had great experience among the villagers in inclosed counties.

8952. I mean in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, where so many are small holders of land?—They seem very flourishing there.

8953. You said that you were against the local authority having the power of holding land; but I presume as there are so many of these small holders whom you have described as being in a flourishing condition, you would favour small holdings by assisting a man to obtain the freehold for himself?—I do not know that I can say very much about that myself. I think if facilities are to be granted for creating small holdings, I should say that the system ought to be twofold, that there ought to be a power enabling a man to take the freehold, and also the power of taking a lease or tenancy. A hard-and-fast rule I think would probably cramp the development of the object in view.

8954. Are you cognisant of the effect of breaking up land into small holdings in foreign countries such as France, Switzerland, and Prussia?—No, I have never studied the foreign land system. I have read about it; but I do not pretend to be able to offer any opinion upon it.

8955. I understood

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Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

8955. I understood you to refer to the Statute of Merton being wiped off the face of the earth; I presume you meant it was superseded by the result of the Inclosure Acts, and rendered illegal?—No, what I said was that I should like to see it wiped off the Statute Book.

8956. Do you not consider that the Inclosure Act of 1845 and the following Acts practically repeal the Statute of Merton?—No; they do not touch it in any possible way unfortunately. That to my mind has been the blot in all the Inclosure Acts. I think that when Parliament was giving facilities for inclosures, or, as in the Act of 1876 for regulation, it ought to have taken the whole thing into its hands and said, We will not have any inclosures at all without the previous sanction of Parliament. But the Inclosure Acts were Acts for facilitating inclosures.

8957. Seeing that the Statute of Merton enabled the lord of the manor to inclose against his commoners, provided he left them sufficient, is not that power absolutely taken away by the Inclosure Act of 1845 and the following Acts?—No, I think not.

8958. Do you mean to contend that the lord of the manor under the recent Acts can inclose against his commoners?—Certainly, if he can show there is sufficient land left. The strongest way to put the case is this: that by the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 all power of inclosure was taken away from the Land Commissioners (the Inclosure Commissioners of those days), and that left the lord's right to "approve" under the Statute of Merton untouched.

8959. Under the recent statutes the lord of the manor has to show that what is left is sufficient to the satisfaction of the body appointed by Parliament, has he not?—No, he does it of his own motion. In one of the biggest cases which we ever had to fight, namely, that of the commons of Banstead, which were metropolitan commons, the lord of the manor began to inclose, and we had to fight him for 10 years.

8960. The attempt at inclosure there was made by a new comer, was it not, who had bought the rights of the lord?—That is true; but there was no variation of the law in that respect; he simply came and said, "There is more common than is wanted here, and I shall enclose."

8961. He was defeated, was he not?—The case is under appeal; we beat him in the first court.

8962. He is beaten up to now?—Yes.

8963. You spoke of inclosures affecting the interests of small holders in respect to Dartmoor. Do you know any particular instance in Dartmoor that illustrates that condition?—There have been vast inclosures in Dartmoor, especially by the Duchy of Cornwall.

8964. Do you happen to know the inclosures at Tormere?—I seem to recollect one at Tavistock that was very much objected to; but I will not be sure about it.

8965. At Tormere, where 800 acres were inclosed by private individuals under the sanction of the Duchy, and where the whole of the pasture rights of the people were transferred to those private inclosures without compensation, may I take that as an illustration of your statement?—Certainly. May I just explain as regards what you put to me just now about the case of a new comer inclosing, you must not take it from me that those are typical cases of inclosures; those cases are not very frequent.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

8966. As a matter of fact, are not inclosures by new purchasers carried out more completely and with less regard to the commoners than is done by the old lords of the manor who have held the estates for generations?—No, I should say not. There are only two cases that I know of out of a number that have been fought since 1865 in which that has been the case. Taking all the big cases I think they were chiefly cases of old lords of the manor.

8967. You are aware, are you not, that it is contended by some lawyers that the Statute of Merton is practically superseded by the Act of 1845?—I have never heard of any lawyer yet saying it; and I am sorry to say I am afraid it is not the case.

Sir *George Campbell.*

8968. Do I understand you to say that at the present time great facilities exist for the creation of small holdings in lands in the neighbourhood of commons?—There is nothing special; there is only the ordinary system of land transfer.

8969. Is there a great deal of land for sale in a shape which would be available for small purchasers?—I can only give that evidence second-hand. I know as a fact that down in the region of the New Forest there are people there who would be willing to cut up their farms into small holdings.

8970. And in that case would the sub-divided farms generally have a right of common over the New Forest?—Yes. If you cut up a tenement with rights attached, each portion takes a portion of the rights; the right goes with the land. I do not know whether the Committee have had their attention drawn to the New Forest Act (1877, I think it is), under which the verderers there have power to grant a right of common in the forest, though the persons are not strictly commoners. That power is largely exercised, I believe.

8971. Having regard to the present condition of commons, and the present state of the land market, do you think there are facilities for obtaining the creation of small holdings?—I cannot say that I have any experience of that matter, but looking at it from the point of view that the land market is very full, I should say that there would be no difficulty in obtaining small holdings of 50 acres or something of that sort; I do not say that it could be obtained altogether for purchase, I do not know that I should say that; I should like to guard myself there; but for taking on tenancies I should say there would be no difficulty.

8972. From your inquiries in counties where commons exist have you found that there is a demand for additional small holdings, whether small ownerships or tenancies?—Yes; they always tell me that they would like to have allotments; they chiefly speak of allotments; I do not know so much about small holdings.

8973. You do not know that there is an active

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

demand for somewhat larger small ownerships, even in cases where all the advantages of commons exist?—I have not heard so great a demand for ownerships as for occupation. The demand would be chiefly for what I call allotments, as distinguished from small holdings; that is allotments of five or six acres.

8974. As much as five or six acres?—Yes: that is the sort of thing.

8975. You told us that supposing it was found possible to take land for small holdings, you thought it was desirable that part of the land should be left in common as common land for small holders, and that it should not all be devoted to small holdings; must you not in that case create some sort of local body to manage that common land; must you not form some kind of community with some system of common management?—The ordinary commons of course have no real management at all. I think probably it would be desirable to have an authority of some sort. If you are going to cut up valuable and highly cultivated land into small ownerships, with a central part as common, no doubt it would be in the interests of the persons concerned to have it properly managed.

8976. Is it not your experience that one of the great evils attaching to the old system of commons was the want of a proper local authority to manage them; is not that the reason why the common land has been cribbed and stolen and abused?—I have not heard it put forward in that way.

8977. Is not the present system under which commons are regulated a system entirely designed to remedy that want of management?—The regulation is not in the interest of the commoners. The regulation of commons, as the term is used, according to the Act of 1876, is regulation rather in the interests of the public.

8978. But to effect a successful arrangement of this kind, under which you would create a large number of small holdings having a common attached, would it not be necessary that there should be some authority to manage it; would you propose that the common should be left wild and uncared for, and no authority constituted?—No, I do not suggest that at all; I do not say that a common under management would not be better for the commoners than one not under management.

8979. Even if you assume that local bodies, elected and created for other purposes, may sometimes have failed to manage lands well, do you not think that it would be possible to create local bodies specially designed for the management of lands and specially for the management of common rights and interests in the land?—I did not intend my remarks with regard to local authorities to extend to pure management. The modern system of commons regulation round London is to put it under the local authority; I was speaking rather of the local authority being the body to acquire and to re-sell or to re-let the land.

8980. Then do you think that the system which has prevailed lately of putting the commons in charge of the local authorities has been successful, and that the local authorities have been found to manage them well?—Certainly, but that is chiefly in the neighbourhood of towns where the commons have been regulated for the public interest in the way of open spaces and otherwise, and not let out to cultivators.

8981. You would not say that every local authority is necessarily an unfit local authority for the management of commons?—No, I did not say that.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

8982. Did you not say that to have the local authority as the landlord was very undesirable?—I think in that sense it certainly would be.

8983. If Parliament were to pass an Act to facilitate the acquisition of small holdings, some authority must be constituted to execute it; can you imagine any other authority except one, popularly elected?—That is assuming that Parliament will select an authority to buy and sell the land.

8984. You are aware, are you not, that there is an authority now in existence for the acquiring and letting of land for allotments?—Yes.

8985. Do you see any objection to the extension of that power of the local authority?—You mean, assuming that I think the purchasing and selling of allotments by local authorities is good.

8986. Yes?—No, none at all.

8987. Then you see no objection to putting in the hands of the local authority which has the management of allotments, the management of small holdings?—Not if it is put in that way.

8988. I think you said that you know of no failures in the attempts to establish the legal rights of commoners in any action that had been tried?—I did not put it quite so high as that: I said that in none of the cases that have been brought in recent years and fought out, have the commoners failed to establish their case.

8989. Have many cases been tried?—Yes. I have a list here which I can give you.

8990. I only want the approximate number; was it a considerable number?—It is about a dozen, I think; I find it is about 14.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

8991. I think your evidence went to show that these commons in your opinion are necessary to keep in existence small holdings?—I do not think I put it quite so high as that. My opinion is that a small holder will not make as much out of his small holding without a common as he will with one; and the absence of commons would tend to destroy small holdings in course of time.

8992. What size of holding are you speaking of?—They vary from two to 20, or 30, or 40 acres.

8993. In all these cases the possession of common rights adds greatly to the value of the small holdings?—Very largely.

8994. You think that the existence of commons and these small holdings together has an effect in diminishing pauperism?—Yes.

8995. Your experience from knowing those places is that there is a smaller amount of pauperism in those localities?—I cannot put it so high

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

high as that. I can only give evidence upon that head at second-hand. I judge from what I see of the people I come in contact with in those localities; and in the little book by Mr. Briscoe Eyre which I have handed in there are some very striking cases given.

8996. I gather that you find that the agricultural or rural population is larger in districts where you have small holdings and common rights associated than in other districts where there are large farms?—I cannot answer that question from personal experience.

8997. I understood you in your evidence to say that you thought it would be desirable to create small holdings out of land that has been inclosed, and that the restitution of those lands for the purpose of small holdings would be a public good?—My answer to some question that was put to me on that point was, that it would be preferable to cut up lands surrounding commons into small holdings, than to take existing commons for the creation of small holdings.

8998. I understood that the restitution of portions of common lands that have been inclosed for the purpose of small holdings would be a good policy, in your opinion?—No; I should not confine it to lands that were formerly common lands.

8999. Still, as those lands are in proximity probably to existing commons, they would naturally suggest themselves, would they not?—I should not say that; I should say that around existing commons the land had not been inclosed from commons; there you have the parish in its pristine condition, so to speak, comprising inclosed lands and common lands.

9000. When you spoke of the restitution of these inclosed lands for the purpose of small holdings, what did you mean?—I do not think that I used the expression "restitution."

9001. Or restoration?—I do not think I meant to give that suggestion at all.

9002. I understood you to say that you thought the lands inclosed from commons would be the best and most suitable lands to cut up into small holdings?—I did not mean to make that suggestion at all; perhaps I used the expression "inclosed," but I did not mean land taken under inclosures; what I meant was land which was as a matter of fact inclosed, as contradistinguished from common lands.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

9003. You have mentioned the Act abolishing feudal tenures in 1660; was that an important Act in the land legislation of this country?—Very; it abolished all feudal tenures.

9004. Was that done by what is known in history as the Convention Parliament?—I do not quite remember. It was in the first year of the Restoration.

9005. It was done, I presume, by what is called the Convention Parliament, which was practically a Parliament composed of those who held land as superiors from the Crown; was not that so?—I am afraid that my history does not carry me back to that.

9006. What I wish to know with regard to that point is, whether the origin of landholding,

Mr. *Angus Sutherlan*.—continued.

as we have it at the present time, dates largely from that Act?—Yes, it does.

9007. And has it not been asserted that by that particular Parliament there was a repudiation on the part of what were called the Barons of their obligations to the State?—I do not quite follow that.

9008. Let me ask one question with regard to the management of commons; is there anything in the law that prevents the commoners from combining for the management of these commons at present?—Nothing whatever. The Commons Act of 1876 specially provides a machinery for establishing boards of management, which undoubtedly would consist principally of the commoners themselves.

9009. As a fact, they have not used that machinery?—Not to a very large extent. Every year there are one or two cases, and, if it is any aid to the Committee, I can give a complete list; but I think you will find that information probably in the last Report of the Land Commissioners.

9010. In fact, are you of opinion that if these privileges granted to the commoners by legislation had been adopted they would have been able better to defend their rights in commons?—If they once adopt the machinery of the Commons Act of 1876, they are virtually safe for ever; but the sticking point of these regulation schemes is the consent required from the lord of the manor. If this Committee, or if Parliament, were to think that it would be desirable to maintain the existing commons for the use of small holders or anybody else, one of the first things I should suggest would be the amendment of the Commons Act of 1876, putting it on the same footing as the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866, the difference being that in the Commons Act of 1876 the consent of the lord of the manor is required to a scheme, whereas in the Act of 1866 it is not required. To give you instances, if you care to have them, as regards commons around London, within the Metropolitan Police District, such as Wimbledon, Putney, and Clapham Commons, the ratepayers can apply for and obtain a scheme, though the lord opposes. But outside the Metropolitan Police District, in the case of such commons as Ashstead and Chobham, and down in the district of Dartmoor, you have to get the lord of the manor's consent before the Land Commissioners will sanction your scheme.

9011. Am I right in supposing you to have a preference for the retention of the present commons as commons, rather than that they should be divided into small holdings or allotments?—Certainly. My impression is that the country would generally prefer that the policy adopted by Parliament in 1876 should be adopted, which is virtually, I contend, a declaration that commons should remain uninclosed, as opposed to the policy which existed up to that date of inclosure.

Mr. *Chaplin.*

9012. You would object, as I understand, to the introduction of local authorities into any scheme for the creation of small holdings?—I should not like to go so far as that. I adhere to what I said before, that I should not like to see,

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Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

as at present advised, ordinary local authorities acting as (to put it shortly) land speculators.

9013. And you would still be of that opinion though you are aware that powers have already been conferred upon the local authorities for the provision of allotments?—I could not compare that opinion with any experience that I have had under the Allotments Act, because I have not had anything to do with the carrying out of that Act.

9014. Of course it may be said that there is a considerable distinction between allotments on the one hand and small holdings upon the other hand; is that your view?—My own view is that allotments would probably extend to perhaps five or six acres; but after that I should say that you got into the region of small holdings. But then, again, I understand that the bulk of allotments in the country are to be taken as tenancies, and not purchased.

9015. In cases where powers have been conferred upon local authorities already for the provision of allotments, they do not extend to more than one acre, do they?—Under the Allotments Act of 1887, I think, it is only one acre.

9016. In the case of small holdings there might be the provision of buildings, and various other matters connected with the management of the estate, which would not occur in the case of allotments, might there not?—Yes, I suppose so, if you assume that every small holding of 50 acres must have a building. I take it that it would often be competent for a man to live in a house in a town and to have a small holding outside, in which case buildings would not be required; but I take it that buildings would be required in a great many cases.

9017. What I wanted to arrive at is this: am I right in gathering this to be the drift of your opinion: that, even assuming the provision of allotments has been satisfactorily carried out by local authorities, it would not necessarily follow that it would be desirable to introduce local authorities into a scheme for the provision of small holdings?—It does not at all necessarily follow. Perhaps the Committee will allow me to say that it occurred to me while Sir Henry Longley was giving his evidence that I could answer a question which you put to him about the desire on the part of persons to take charity lands in allotments. There is one class of charity lands which I have had more or less to do with, and that is, the existing fuel allotments under the old Inclosure Acts. A great many of those old

Mr. *Chaplin*—continued.

Inclosure Acts set out these fuel allotments, and in many cases I find there is a very great desire indeed on the part of persons to take them in allotments, and to cultivate them.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*.

9018. I wish to ask you one further question with reference to the opinion you expressed that the Statute of Merton still remains in force. As I understand, the Statute of Merton gave the lord of the manor a right, as opposed to the common law of the time, to inclose any part of his manor, provided the tenants had enough?—Yes.

9019. But seeing that the Inclosure Act of 1845 states, with respect to the wastes of a manor, the lands subject to full common rights at all times, that they are never to be inclosed without the previous consent of Parliament, do you not consider that that supersedes the Statute of Merton?—That clause, I think, you will find only relates to inclosures under the machinery of that Act.

9020. It includes all commons subject to full common rights, does it not?—Yes; but the point is this: previously to the Act of 1845 there were certain general Inclosure Acts, but after the Act of 1845 no inclosure could take place under the Act of 1845 without the consent of Parliament.

9021. The point I want to get is this: can the lord of the manor settle in his own mind that his tenants have enough on his wastes or his manor, and straightway go and inclose the rest in the face of the modern Inclosure Acts?—So far as the Acts are concerned he can; but of course he is always subject to the risk of some commoner bringing an action against him to make him prove that he has left sufficient.

9022. Under the powers of the recent Acts of Parliament?—No, they have nothing to do with that.

9023. But the commoners have these powers as given to them under these Acts, have they not?—Commoners have no greater rights given to them under the Act of 1845 than they possessed before.

9024. What was the commoners' appeal against the landlord under the Statute of Merton?—When the Statute of Merton was passed, they had to bring what was called a writ of assize of novel disseisin, what we should call an action, against the lord to make him prove that he had left sufficient.

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Friday, 9th August 1889.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.	Sir Walter Foster.
Sir George Campbell.	Mr. Llewellyn.
Mr. Jesse Collings.	Mr. Halley Stewart.
Sir Charles Dalrymple.	Mr. Seale-Hayne.
Mr. Thomas Ellis.	Mr. Angus Sutherland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. WILLIAM ALEXANDER, LL.D., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

9025. WHAT is your profession? — A journalist.

9026. Where do you live?—In Aberdeen.

9027. I think you are prepared to give us evidence as to small holdings in the north-east of Scotland?—Yes.

9028. Are these Papers which you have put in a summary of your evidence?—Very much so.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9029. Perhaps you will state what your previous experience with regard to the land has been?—My previous experience was just simply being brought up as a boy amongst small holdings, very much, until I was past 20.

Chairman.

9030. Then, perhaps, you would read to the Committee what you have to say on the subject of Aberdeenshire?—In point of extent, Aberdeenshire is only the sixth largest county in Scotland. But while the counties of Inverness, Argyle, Ross and Cromarty (combined), Perth, and Sutherland, are all of considerably larger size, the cultivated area in Aberdeenshire is much larger than the cultivated area of any other Scotch county. By the Board of Trade Agricultural Returns for 1888, the cultivated area, and including fallow-land and grass, is shown to be 613,924 acres, as against 348,930 acres in Perthshire, which stands next to it; Dumfries, Lanark, and Forfarshire, which come next after, each has a cultivated area about a third less than that of Perth county. And as bearing on the question of land reclamation and improvement, the most reliable estimates by old writers, when compared with recent Board of Trade figures, show that the cultivated area of Aberdeenshire has been extended by about 170,000 acres, or nearly one-fourth of the whole present area, beyond the cultivated area about the end of the first decade of the present century. The district formed by Aberdeenshire and part of the neighbouring counties of Kincardine and Banff contains a much greater number of small holdings in pro-

Chairman—continued.

portion to those of larger size than any other part of lowland Scotland. In 1868 a careful classification of all agricultural holdings in Aberdeenshire, according to amount of rental, was prepared by Mr. Alexander Fraser, Assessor of Inland Revenue for the county at that time, and a most competent official, whose duty it was to make up the valuation roll; there has been no similar classification prepared since. But as very little change has taken place in the relative proportions of the different classes of holdings during the past 20 years, a summary of Mr. Fraser's figures will give the Committee a perfectly reliable idea of the proportion of quite small holdings to those of the larger sizes within the county. The total number of holdings of all sizes was 11,462. Not a single holding was valued quite so high as 700 *l.* of rental; and only 36 bore rents of 400 *l.* and upwards. It may be convenient to remark that as the average rate of rental for the county is not far off 1 *l.* an acre, the number of pounds of valued rental may be taken as roughly corresponding with the number of acres rented. Of holdings valued at 100 *l.* and under 400 *l.*, the number was 1,567. There remained 9,859 holdings; of these, 1,837 were assessed at 50 *l.* and upwards, but under 100 *l.*; and so many as 8,022 fell into the class assessed at under 50 *l.* of rental. These again divided themselves into 3,329 holdings, of which the assessed rental was 15 *l.* and upwards, but under 50 *l.* (small and very small farms, in short), and 4,693 holdings, of which the assessed rental was 4 *l.* and upwards, but under 15 *l.*; mere crofts as they are called in Aberdeenshire, where two or three cows were kept, with a proportion where only a house and garden constituted the subject of valuation. Then with regard to small holdings I have put together a few statements, which I will run briefly over, with the leave of the Committee, showing the kind of division that occurs between rural holdings and those about villages or burghs.

9031. Perhaps I can take you through this by question. Dealing with Aberdeenshire, what is the total number of holdings under 50 *l.* and

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Chairman—continued.

above 10 *l.*?—Under 50 *l.*? I take it that of the 11,000 somewhere about 4,000 would be of the size you indicate.

9032. And of course if you take a lower rental, say 7 *l.*, the number would be increased?—Yes, very considerably increased.

9033. Are these holdings held on lease?—Most of what I class as rural holdings are under lease—except to a very small extent they are so.

9034. We are talking of holdings with a rental of 10 *l.* and upwards?—They would be mostly under lease.

9035. For what length of term?—Nineteen years.

9036. And what class of men occupy these holdings?—A very considerable number of them are men who have been bred on the farm as agricultural labourers.

9037. And do they succeed as a rule?—Many of them do succeed very well indeed.

9038. In these cases who provides the buildings?—Formerly there was a mixed kind of arrangement, but now mostly the proprietor, almost wholly the proprietor.

9039. And is the expense heavy; does it stand in the way of the creation of these small holdings?—It does to a considerable extent.

9040. Has the tenant any security for the improvements which he makes?—He has simply the security of the Agricultural Holdings Act; but the general complaint of the tenants (and I think the complaint is just) is, that where a tenant has made very considerable improvements, as has been very frequently the case, the protection which he gets under the Agricultural Holdings Act is not enough.

9041. Besides these holdings with rentals above 10 *l.* there is a system of lotted lands, is there not?—Yes, in connection with, not a great many, but several villages and burghs. I have noted two of such cases here on the property of the Duke of Fife; there is first Macduff and then Turriff.

9042. Taking Macduff first, what is the number of tenants there?—The number of tenants there is 154.

9043. And what is the acreage?—Nine-hundred and twenty-seven acres. The average acreage would be something approaching six acres.

9044. And can you give us the rental?—The rental of 927 *a.* 3 *r.* 3 *p.* is 1,162 *l.* 4 *s.*

9045. That is about 25 *s.* per acre?—Yes, about that.

9046. Then at Turriff what is the number?—At Turriff there are 110 tenants who have amongst them 675 *a.* 3 *r.* 8 *p.*, and they pay altogether 1,042 *l.* 2 *s.*

9047. These lands I think are let in connection with buildings, are they not?—They are let in connection with buildings. In all ordinary cases the feus in Scotland are building feus. The holders of those lots, in every case I believe, in those two places, and in several others, have got a building lot where a man has his house and any other adjuncts he requires; and then the lot runs along with it.

9048. But is the lot contiguous to the house?—In almost no case is it quite contiguous, but it is always at such a distance as to be easily workable.

Chairman—continued.

9049. Are all these allotments or lotted lands held on lease?—They are not held on lease generally. In the case of the Duke of Fife they are held in connection with the feu; but the proprietor retains the right in his own hand of recalling the lotted land in order to guard himself against any misuse by subletting and so forth.

9050. It is really intended to prevent the abuse of the allotment?—Exactly.

9051. I suppose that practically therefore the tenants are not disturbed as long as they fulfil the estate conditions?—They are not; their rent altogether is quite an easy rent for the land, and I do not think there has been a single case of a tenant if he did right by the land being disturbed; so that it is practically continuity or fixity of tenure.

9052. I suppose the people who have these allotments do not live out of them; they have other occupations?—Almost invariably.

9053. But does it assist them in their incomes?—I think it assists them very considerably.

9054. Do they get their own supplies from it, milk and potatoes?—Yes, they do, milk and potatoes, and all that kind of thing, and indeed they very often sell milk and butter particularly; when a man has two or three cows he does not want nearly all his dairy produce.

9055. Are the holdings well cultivated?—Usually they are very well cultivated, and the crops compare very well with the crops on the larger farms in the neighbourhood.

9056. Then, summing up, you regard the results of these village allotments as very satisfactory?—I regard them as very satisfactory altogether.

9057. I suppose they have a tendency to foster habits of industry and thrift?—They have a tendency to foster habits of industry and thrift, and the young people of the family get acquainted with the management of cows and have some ideas of cultivation of land acquired by their being brought up in that way. And this is often of very considerable use to them in after life.

9058. Speaking from your experience would you like to see an extension of this system of small holdings and occupations?—In Aberdeenshire the system as you see has extended itself pretty well already, although there are certain facilities that might very well be given so as to allow of an extension where the local circumstances are suitable.

9059. Have you considered in what way facilities could be given for the extension of these holdings or of small occupations of any kind?—I have not considered that very particularly. Some powers might be put in the hands of the local authorities. For example, there is the case where a proprietor exacts what seems to me quite an exorbitant feu rent, where the nucleus of a village is; there are cases where villages would naturally form themselves, but for the fact that the proprietor either refuses to give a feu at all at any price whatever, or where you have 6 *l.* to 8 *l.* an acre asked for barren land which really in the proprietor's hands, as it is, is not worth 6 *s.* for any purpose.

9060. But you are speaking now rather of the creation of residential holdings; what I want you to

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Chairman—continued.

to direct your attention to is the question of small agricultural holdings; have you seen Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—I have seen it, but I have not paid so close attention to it that I should care to speak to it in detail.

9061. Would you say what you think of the proposal that the local authority should have the power to buy land for the purpose of making small holdings, and should then be enabled to offer these small holdings to purchasers upon the understanding that they would pay down one-fourth of the purchase-money, and that the remainder should be left as a loan, of which part might be repayable in a certain number of years at a moderate rate of interest?—I should think it quite expedient to empower the local authorities in certain circumstances, and under fitting conditions, to acquire land. It seems to me that the creation, as it practically is, of a peasant proprietary by that system is a different question, and one not free from difficulty.

9062. What is the difficulty?—The difficulty just comes in this way: the burden that the man making himself a proprietor would have to bear, as it seems to me, would be as much as or more very frequently than he would have to bear in renting land.

9063. That is so, no doubt. According to this plan the sum that he would pay annually would probably exceed the sum that he might pay for rent; at all events it would exceed the sum paid for rent for large farms?—Yes; it is there that the whole difficulty comes in, I think.

9064. But then he would have the expectation of becoming practically owner of his land?—But what is such an expectation worth to him after all? All my reading on the subject of peasant proprietors, and all my observation, leads me to the conclusion that except under special circumstances the creation of a peasant proprietary is a very doubtful experiment.

9065. You are opposed to the multiplication of peasant proprietors as a method of cultivating the land; do you prefer the renting system?—Yes, in cases of ordinary agricultural or pastoral land. It becomes a different matter altogether with land in the close vicinity of a large town where the owner of the land can go into small cultivation and sell a good deal of garden produce off his land; or where he can find employment for himself, or for any extra working power he has in the shape of horses, outside his holding altogether.

9066. That would refer to very small holdings where a man could not obtain an entire subsistence from his own tenancy, his own occupation?—Yes.

9067. But taking the case of a farm of 30 acres, a man and his family could live upon that if it were fair land, could they not?—In our part of Scotland I do not think a peasant proprietor with 30 acres would make a very good thing of it.

9068. Instead of taking acreage, I will take rental; supposing that a man had land which was valued at from 30 *l.* to 50 *l.* a year rent, he could live out of that, could he not?—You mean as a proprietor?

9069. As a tenant at fair rent, or as a proprietor paying 4 per cent. on the value of the land?—Perhaps, but there comes in paying 4 per cent. on the land. It was a saying of a very shrewd Aberdeenshire landed proprietor, that being a landlord, meant just 2½ per cent. for his money, and "a good deal of ill-will with it." In the case of simply renting land, as compared with owning it, where you have all the proprietors' burdens to bear (from 15 to 20 per cent. of the rental with us, and the tenants too), a man altogether is better as a simple tenant, because it comes to this, that he gets the land belonging to the proprietor at a very low rate of interest (less than 4 per cent.). And if he has to pay 4 per cent. on the principle of his paying down say one-fourth, and allowing the three-fourths to remain as a quit-rent; he is very much better off where he can have his land at from 2½ to 3 per cent., as I believe is really the case, from the landlord.

9070. You think that the temptation of ownership would not induce him to pay 1½ per cent. more?—I do not think it would.

9071. Have you considered the question whether it is desirable by legislation to offer any increased facilities for making small tenants; to put aside small owners?—I do not see that very special facilities are wanted. So far as my experience goes, what is most wanted is a fair and equitable adjustment of the land laws, and to put the man who is a tenant in this position, that he will know that if he is disturbed in his holding he will have full compensation for all the improvements he has made. The complaint is that the Agricultural Holdings Act does not give adequate compensation, or adequate protection, where a man has made improvements of any consequence.

9072. We are not dealing with the question of land generally, but entirely with the question of small holdings; do you consider that an alteration of the Agricultural Improvements Act in the direction of giving fuller compensation to tenants would have the effect of increasing the number of small holdings in Scotland?—I do not think it would to any very great extent, so far as the north-eastern part of Scotland is concerned.

9073. Would not the effect of making the landlord liable to larger compensation than he is at present, make him unwilling to let his land in small plots for fear of these claims?—I do not think it would. For example, I asked a gentleman who manages a good many landed estates how the matter stood between small and large holders in regard to the rate of rent and payment, and in the note in which he replied he says: "As a rule it will be found that there are fewer arrears of rent on small holdings of from 10 to 30 acres than upon large farms. If a holding of from 30 to 40 acres is advertised to let, we would have three or four applications for one that we should have for a farm of from 300 to 400 acres." With us in the north-eastern part of Scotland—although unfortunately for some time, about 40 to 50 years ago, after the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1845 passed, larger farms were very much in favour, because they wanted to get rid of the small holdings to decrease the risk of pauperism—that has changed very much, and partly because the proprietors found they were simply depriving themselves of the best class of labourers they could

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Chairman—continued.

could have by putting those men off their estates. I find in the evidence given before a Royal Commission in 1867, evidence of several proprietors well known with us. There was Mr. William Leslie, formerly Member of Parliament for Aberdeenshire, who gave his evidence distinctly in favour of small holdings. He says, "I have on my property as many crofts as I have farms. I consider the crofts of great value for the purpose of supplying the country with a class of respectable servants, and constituted to bring up families of a lower but respectable class in habits of self-respect and independence." Mr. Leslie considered that the most profitable size of holding for a crofter was six acres of good land. Then Mr. Thomas Innes, of Learney, another well known proprietor, said, "I have a considerable number of crofters upon my property; labourers are very anxious to have crofts, particularly for the purpose of enabling them to keep a cow. I think it is important to maintain crofters in order that their families may keep up the supply of labourers well instructed in farm work." Another witness, Mr. Andrew Boyd, who had the management of estates yielding a rental of 30,000 *l.*, expressed a precisely similar opinion as to the value of crofts, and he added, "I think that a croft should rarely exceed 10 acres."

9074. I think we are all agreed as to the desirability of these holdings; but I am asking you what legislation is, in your opinion, desirable in order to increase their number. You have told me in the first place that you do not think it would be any good to offer facilities to tenants to become owners, because the terms must necessarily be higher than those which they would pay to become tenants. Then I asked you whether you think that any facilities should be given to enable them to become tenants, and you have told me no, except that the provision of the Agricultural Compensation Act should be extended. I asked you then whether that would increase the number of small holdings, and you said no, you did not think that it would make much difference. I asked you whether it would diminish them, as it might make a landlord less likely to let his land, and you said you did not think it would have any effect in that way. Am I right in saying that you do not see your way to any legislation at all that would materially affect the number of these small holdings?—Except to give a greater power to the local authorities to acquire lands under conditions in suitable localities.

9075. What are they to do with the lands when they have acquired them?—I would doubt of giving them power, except in certain localities, as in some village communities, where there would be a very considerable demand for these small holdings. In some cases proprietors will not on any account allow their lands to be cut up.

9076. But your view is that the local authority should acquire the land; do you then propose that the local authority should be the landlord and let the land, because you say it is no use their offering to sell it?—They might to a certain extent in the close vicinity of a town. It is more in the case of those purely rural holdings where I do not think it would be almost of any use. I have a note here from a gentleman who manages estates with a rental of about 100,000 *l.* He says, "Within the past two years I have tried to sell farms and crofts separately, but there has been no demand. I cannot find over all Aberdeenshire any real demand for the purchase of small farms. It is not a question of price at all. The occupiers of such holdings find it more profitable to sit on the terms they at present have, getting the benefit of the landlord's capital at what is practically a very low rate of interest, and having all the profit of cultivation to themselves." And that experience is not singular.

Chairman—continued.

9077. Yes; that confirms the view you have already expressed, that there would be no demand to purchase; but you have just said that you would propose to give the local authorities power to buy land for this object, and I ask you what are the local authority to do with the land when they have bought it; are they to let it out?—I do not see any objection at all to their letting out the land in lots, as the Duke of Fife does; and as several other proprietors do.

9078. Therefore they would become landlords in the place of the existing landlords?—They would in that case. On the other hand they would be at liberty to sell if people really wished to buy.

9079. You do not think that there is any demand to purchase, but there might be a demand to rent the lands if the local authorities had them in their possession?—I have no doubt at all that there would be a demand to rent lands, and there might be some desire to purchase in the immediate neighbourhood of communities such as those I have mentioned, say Turriff, with from 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants. And a man by purchasing there could do better; as I have already said he could cultivate his land more for garden produce and so on, and get a better livelihood out of it than a more purely agricultural man could hope to do.

9080. But taking the case of a local authority which has bought land and let it out to these small holders, would there be no risk in that transaction?—There would be a certain risk, no doubt.

9081. There has been a great fall in the value of land in Scotland, has there not?—Not very great.

9082. Have not rents fallen in Scotland during the last 10 years?—With us rents have not fallen very much at all. Another gentleman who manages an estate in Aberdeenshire told me two or three weeks ago that he had been letting some of these small holdings, and that he got quite the old rent; that in one case where the old rent was 15 *l.* he had four or five offers of 16 *l.* and one as high as 19 *l.*; and there was nothing very exceptional at all in the case. That is a pretty distinct indication of the desire that there is for small holdings.

9083. I want to put this to you: if the local authority sold the land they would have one-fourth of the purchase-money down according to the proposal which has been made?—Yes.

9084. And that would be a security to them; and they would have the repayments every year, so that every year their liability would lessen?—Yes; of course.

9085. And

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Chairman—continued.

9085. And practically there would not be much risk about a transaction of that kind?—No, there would not.

9086. But taking the alternative proposition, if they buy land now they must buy it on the basis of the existing rent, which you say has not fallen?—Yes.

9087. If owing to bad trade or any other circumstances, the value of land fell they would not be able to get those rents, and there would be a risk of losing their money?—There would no doubt be a certain risk.

9088. Would the ratepayers in Scotland, who are not all anxious for small holdings, like to run the risk of renting land to the persons who would be small holders?—The risk would be so very small that I do not think a local authority would be in much difficulty at all, because they would look to the character of the purchase they made; and in the vicinity of small towns and villages we have no examples, so far as I know, of land, even under the recent state of depression, coming down in value.

9089. Just follow that up a little. You say that land is let to pay 2½ per cent. to the landlord?—Yes; that is the statement the owner quoted.

9090. Therefore, the land would be sold at 40 years' purchase of the rent. Supposing that land was paying 100 *l.* a year, the fair price of that land in the market would be 4,000 *l.*?—Yes.

9091. Supposing that the local authority bought the land for 4,000 *l.*, they would have to charge, in order to recoup themselves, at least three per cent.; they would have to raise the rents?—They would have to raise the rents, certainly.

9092. Then why should the small tenant prefer to pay a local authority 120 *l.* a year for precisely the same thing for which he is paying a landlord 100 *l.* a year?—I do not quite follow you there. Is that the case of village lands, those lotted lands?

9093. No, I am not talking of lotted lands, I am talking of the case you suggest, that the local authority in a rural district should purchase land in order to let it out in small holdings?—I meant only in the vicinity of villages.

9094. You would not give them any power, except in the case of villages?—I do not see that they could do at most any good if they had it.

9095. I think you said, in answer to my question whether you would give the power, that you were talking about rural districts; you said that there might be some desire to purchase in case of proximity to villages, but that in the case of rural districts there would only be a desire to rent, and you would meet that by allowing the local authority to buy land for the purpose of leasing?—I may not have made myself quite distinct; but I was referring more especially to the case of lands near small towns and villages.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9096. Is there any small property in Aberdeenshire of, say, from 10 *l.* or 15 *l.* to 60 *l.* or 70 *l.* valuation?—Do you mean any small property cultivated by the owner?

9097. Yes?—There are a few such, but, as known to me, only in the vicinity of Aberdeen itself.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

9098. Throughout the county it would be quite exceptional; there are practically none?—It would be quite exceptional throughout the county; there may be a few.

9099. Then the habit of small property has not arisen in Aberdeenshire?—No, it has not; so far from it, 50 to 60 or more years ago all the small proprietors, almost without exception, were wiped out when the process of agricultural improvement began.

9100. But were there ever such small proprietors in Aberdeenshire?—Yes, there were a good many formerly.

9101. But were they freeholders or feuars generally?—It varied to some extent, I think. In one parish, Strathdon (in the upper part of the Don), there were I think as many as between 20 and 30 small proprietors. There are now only two or three. There were a good many in other districts.

9102. They have almost all been wiped out?—Yes.

9103. Has that process of wiping out taken place a good many years ago?—Yes, that process of wiping out took place just about the time when agricultural improvement began to be pushed pretty generally.

9104. Then in the present day, which is more favourable to small holdings, there would not be a tendency, would there, to wipe out any that exist?—I think there would be no tendency to wipe them out now if vigorously worked.

9105. Apart from properties, Aberdeenshire is essentially the county of small tenants, I think I may say, in Scotland?—I think so; there are many more small tenants there than in any other county of Scotland.

9106. At the present moment small tenants are much more favourably placed than large tenants; there is a much greater demand for small tenancies than for large?—Yes, much greater. I think I have already stated, on the authority of a land agent who has had long experience, that they would have three or four offers for a small place for one offer for a larger one, and that, moreover, the rents are better paid.

9106.* What do you think is about the best size of a farm for a man and his family?—A very good size is from about 50 to 60 acres.

9107. Which means about 50 *l.* to 60 *l.* rent?—Yes, about that.

9108. A very large proportion of the farms in Aberdeenshire are about that size, are they not?—A very large proportion.

9109. And before the turn in agricultural prosperity, was there no tendency on account of the difficulty about buildings to diminish the numbers of these small holdings?—There has been a tendency in that way. Limited proprietors have a difficulty because the tenants will not be content with the style of houses that would have suited them 50 years ago. About that date a man could get such a dwelling as he was content with, a little thatched house and his other buildings, at a cost of perhaps not more than from 20 *l.* or 30 *l.* Now 120 *l.* I fancy on a little place of from 15 to 20 acres would be the very lowest. That, charged at 4 per cent. even, makes a very considerable addition to his rental; 6 *l.* interest upon a little place where the whole rental is perhaps 12 *l.* to 15 *l.*

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

9110. Do you think that on the smallest farm you could put up a decent house and the necessary farm buildings for 120 *l.*?—I have heard it stated that it has been done, but of course it can only be done on a very moderate scale at so low a rate as that.

9111. Do you think that a landlord could generally do it at that rate?—Very few landlords I am afraid could.

9112. Take the 50 *l.* or 60 *l.* man in Aberdeenshire; he is a very superior good class of man, is he not?—He is usually a very capable man. Most of them have been bred on larger farms, and are quite competent to do all sorts of farm work; some of them have been in responsible positions, and you would be quite surprised to find upon how very little capital a man of that class can contrive to start on a little holding.

9113. Besides good agriculture, these people have fine cattle, have they not; they raise and fatten good cattle for the market?—Yes, they do, the very best class of cattle.

9114. That class of farmer needs some shelter for his cattle, does he not?—Yes, certainly.

9115. What do you think in the nature of modern requirements it would cost the landlord, as the landlord usually goes about these things, to provide the farm buildings, the house, the cattle byres, and all the rest of it, for a farm of that kind of from 50 to 60 acres?—For a farm of 50 or 60 acres, I should say, as the landlord goes about it in the ordinary way of giving a contract to some builder to go on and do it, he could not do it under from 250 *l.* to 300 *l.*

9116. Do you think that he could do it for that?—I daresay he could do it for that.

9117. Do you think that if he remitted it to a builder, the tenant would be satisfied with it when it was done?—No doubt about it; and if the tenant had an interest in keeping down the charge, perhaps he could do it for a little less. Still, on a farm of 50 *l.* rent, the interest-charge for building forms a heavy item.

9118. Have you had experience of the old Aberdeenshire system, under which the tenant put up buildings, and under the name of ameliorations was entitled to compensation at the end of his tenure?—I know generally about it, but I think it is practically out of use now.

9119. In former days, when tenants were content with a humbler class of buildings, did that system answer well?—It answered very well in a way; but it was a very poor class of buildings often, and it was not by any means a satisfactory state of things.

9120. To this day do not a good many tenants own the buildings?—Not very many in Aberdeenshire.

9121. Not in some parts of the county; up in Deeside and up in Donside?—Not a great many; it is getting gradually and rapidly worked out under the new system, whereby the proprietor provides the buildings; and, as I said before, providing buildings forms a considerable difficulty in the extension of small holdings, because you can easily understand that the charge for the buildings is greater in proportion on a small holding than it is on a larger one.

9122. Until lately then has not the result been some tendency towards an aggregation of these small holdings into larger ones?—It has to a slight extent; but then, on the other hand, most proprietors now have begun very generally to see the importance of having small holdings. For, as one of those witnesses whom I quoted on the 1867 Commission says, they must have a supply of labourers, and if there is a great scarcity of labourers they have to pay more money for an unsatisfactory character of labour, which becomes a very serious matter.

9123. Then it being so serious a matter as regards the landlord, are there cases in which the landlord and the tenant come to terms under which the tenant does part of the work?—Yes, there are such cases.

9124. Does that answer well?—It answers fairly well. I have known cases where a burdened proprietor was able to make quite a satisfactory arrangement with a tenant who had means, and made an allowance in the rent for what the tenant did in the way of building.

9125. Do not you think that arrangements of that kind might be facilitated by some improvement in the Agricultural Holdings Act, so that the present difficulty which exists might be alleviated?—They might, and no doubt could.

9126. But you have not any particular suggestions to make as regards improvements in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have no particular suggestions to make. I think the tendency has been for farmers rather to underrate the importance of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that they ought to have given their attention much more to getting it amended, and made mor esatisfactory.

9127. You said that rents had not diminished I think in Scotland, especially as regards small holdings?—I spoke more particularly of Aberdeenshire.

9128. That is just what I was going to ask you. I suppose you are aware that in the Lowlands of Scotland rents have very much diminished?—Yes, in all places where large farms prevail rents have diminished very much; but that is not the result in Aberdeenshire.

9129. But that is the result; you find that wherever large farms prevail rents have diminished very much?—Yes, where large farms prevail rents have diminished very much.

9130. But small farms have not diminished in rental?—They have not diminished in rental; there has been no great diminution in rent in Aberdeenshire at all.

9131. I understand you to say that you do not think it would be prudent that the local authority should undertake to acquire land in order to let it out in considerable farms?—No, I do not think so.

9132. Coming to the smaller class of holdings, are there not throughout Aberdeenshire a considerable number of largish crofts with buildings upon them which are held from year to year without leases?—There is no very large number. The rule, I think, would be that with holdings of over seven acres they usually have a lease, and in some cases, even where the acreage is less, they go on a 19 years' lease.

9133. Are there a good many properties without any leases?—Not many; very few I should say.

9134. With

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

9134. With regard to Lord Aberdeen's property, is it not the case that the small holders have no leases?—Quite the small ones; but I should think that on Lord Aberdeen's property even, where the extent is from 10 to 15 acres, they have leases as a rule.

9135. Then what I understand you to say is, that in Aberdeenshire, and, I believe, in other parts of Scotland, what corresponds to crofts in England are much larger holdings, averaging six acres?—Yes, but you find a good many about half that size.

9136. And a good many larger?—Yes, they run up to 12, 15, and 20 acres; and they are a very thrifty and careful class of holders in those small places.

9137. You think that a beneficial form of tenure for which there is a great demand, and which might with advantage be extended?—Yes, I think there is always a good demand for that class of small holdings.

9138. And I understand you to say that although you would not recommend the local authorities acquiring land for the purpose of letting regular farms, it would be desirable that the local authorities should acquire land in the neighbourhood of villages and small towns to let it out in plots of this kind for which there is such an active demand?—I think it would be advantageous that the local authority should have reasonable powers of purchase, because they could very often promote the growth and prosperity of a village, or other place, very much in that way.

9139. You think it might be desirable that in the neighbourhood of small growing places the local authority should be able to acquire land upon reasonable terms; that it might have a double advantage, first, by promoting small agricultural industry of this kind, by letting out the land in six or eight acre plots, and, secondly, in having the land ready for profitable letting for building in case there should be a demand for building?—Yes, in all those places on the Duke of Fife's property, and on two or three other properties in Aberdeenshire, where the system of lotted lands prevails, one can very easily see the advantage altogether in many ways. In most of those places there is an appearance of homely comfort and well-doing, and an absence of all that squalid misery which you see very often even about small towns.

9140. So that you would strongly recommend measures to increase this system?—I think that in every case of a small town or village it would be advantageous; and I would refer with very considerable confidence to any of those places of Lord Fife's or any other places where practically the same system prevails.

9141. There are a very great many small towns and villages in Aberdeenshire, are there not?—There are a good many.

9142. And are these lotted lands only found in a few of them such as you have mentioned, Lord Fife's property, and one or two others?—Only in comparatively few.

9143. Most of them have not these small holdings?—No. Small holdings are held in different ways in a number of the others, and usually at rents I should say considerably higher than those paid by Lord Fife's "lotted" tenants.

9144. I think that the rents you have mentioned as paid by Lord Fife's tenants are perhaps exceptionally low for land of this kind?—They are.

9145. People generally would be willing to give a higher rent than that for good land situated near a village?—I have no doubt that if any of them were to let, a higher rental could be readily got.

9146. So that if the local authority got land upon favourable terms they might probably, if it were necessary to repay them, get higher rents than those which you have mentioned?—Yes; and I believe that the landlords who let lands in that way have found no difficulty whatever in obtaining their rentals promptly and with few arrears.

9147. And I understand you to say, although it is not immediately the subject of our inquiry, that the holding of such lands, and the creation of such villages where the people might hold such lands, would be greatly facilitated if the people who held the lands were able to get residential plots on more reasonable terms with regard to feuing than they now get?—I think so. I think you will agree that such a charge as 8 *l.* an acre on a barren moor where there is a natural tendency for a village to grow up, the moor not being worth perhaps a couple of shillings an acre before, is a little too much, and that the local authority might have power to acquire land where they thought it expedient at a very much less charge than that, and yet the proprietor be well enough paid.

9148. I think you said that improvements in the law with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, and such like, you did not think would increase very much the number of small farms; was that spoken rather with reference to Aberdeenshire, where, as you have already said, there is a very large proportion of small farms, and therefore there is not so much room for an increase in the number as there is in other parts of Scotland?—It was spoken more particularly with regard to Aberdeenshire, because I know the ground there better than anywhere else.

9149. In parts of the country where there is a deficiency of small farms, do you not think that if the law could be improved in that way, it might have a beneficial effect in stimulating the creation of small farms?—Yes; where there is a marked deficiency of those small holdings, it would be different from the case of Aberdeenshire, where the small holdings prevail very much.

9150. But as regards the smaller holdings, short of small farms, you think that there is a great need for measures which would increase them?—Yes, I certainly do.

Sir *Charles Dalrymple.*

9151. If the tide has turned in favour of small holdings, do you consider in regard to the part of Scotland with which you are acquainted, there is any need for legislation?—There is no very pressing need beyond what I have already said,

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Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

said, that the small tenants wish for more adequate protection than they have got under the Agricultural Holdings Act, because a very frequent complaint has been that when a man has made improvements, costing him a good deal of labour, if not money, at the end of his lease the place is occasionally advertised in the public newspapers, and he has to bid against all comers without getting any adequate compensation for what he has done to improve the place.

9152. I was, of course, referring to legislation on the subject of our inquiry when I asked you whether, if the tide has turned in favour of small holdings as compared with throwing small holdings into large farms, there is any great need for legislation as regards the part of the country with which you are connected with regard to small holdings?—There is no pressing need in my view.

9153. You yourself are not strongly in favour of the creation of small holdings except near towns, as I understand?—I am quite in favour of the creation of small holdings, but it is a different question to say how you are to legislate for their creation. I think that the proprietor's own interest should lead him to favour the creation of small holdings rather.

9154. Do you share the view expressed by some one whom you quoted, that men would rather be tenants than owners of small holdings, because the object was to get the use of the landlord's capital at a very low rate of interest?—Yes; they see it so when brought face to face with it in a practical way.

9155. And in addition to that, I understand you to say that the landlords would have to erect much better buildings nowadays than formerly?—Yes, so they have.

9156. I suppose very few landlords, except such great proprietors as you have named once or twice, could stand such a state of things, getting a very low rate of interest for their land, and putting up better buildings than formerly?—That is one of the main difficulties just now, particularly in the creation of additional small holdings; the charge for buildings being greater in proportion than the charge where the farms are larger.

9157. Then applying that to the proposal to

Sir *Charles Dalrymple*—continued.

confer these powers on the local authority, I suppose you would admit that the local authority, unlike the present landlords, would have to make the transaction pay?—They would have to make it pay, or try at least.

9158. Because the money of the ratepayers would be involved?—Yes.

9159. Therefore the occupant of a small holding, held from the local authority, would come under somewhat more severe discipline as to rent than he would under the present landlord?—Yes, that applies in the case of village lands, which I had more particularly in view, because it is mainly in the case of those village lands that, I think, the local authority might buy land to some considerable good use. Away from village communities, I think their buying land is a more doubtful thing altogether.

9160. You would admit, would you not, that where a local authority would be obliged to make the transaction pay, because of the ratepayers' money being involved, the rent might have to be higher?—Yes; but then in the case of those in the immediate neighbourhood of towns and villages rents are higher, and men can afford to pay and do pay higher rents. Probably, in the vicinity of such a town as I live in, Aberdeen, the rent is more than double within a circle of five or six miles what it is in the county generally.

9161. Because of the man having some other occupation?—Because he is so near a good market for garden produce and dairy produce.

9162. What do you contemplate by the local authority who is to acquire the land?—That is just the question. I should say the County Council, where County Councils will exist by-and-bye.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9163. So far as regards the acquisition of lands in the neighbourhood of small towns and villages, I suppose you would contemplate that the municipal authority of the town or village would be the local authority?—Yes, where they have a municipality; but then there would be a number of cases where only the County Council could, I fancy, come in.

Mr. ROBERT DUNCAN, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

9164. WHAT are you?—A ploughman.

9165. Where do you live?—In Perth.

9166. Do you occupy a small holding yourself?—No.

9167. Have you any land?—No.

9168 Have you studied the question of small holdings?—Yes, a good deal.

9169. Are you acquainted with the feeling of the labourers in your part of Scotland?—Yes, to a great extent.

9170. Is there a demand for small holdings there?—Yes; a very great demand for small holdings.

9171. And is there any difficulty in obtaining them?—Yes.

9172. What kind of small holdings do they

Chairman—continued.

want?—Of a graduated size, from six to 50 acres.

9173. Do they want to buy them or to rent them?—Many are in favour of being owners.

9174. Would they object to pay a little more to be owner than they would to be tenant?—No.

9175. You do not think they would object to pay 4 per cent. upon the money lent them in order to become small owners?—Could they not have it at less than 4 per cent.?

9176. I think you may take it for granted that they would not get it for less than 4 per cent.?—Four per cent. is a very high per-centage for money at the present day.

9177. For

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Chairman—continued.

9177. For money lent upon a small holding, do you think so?—Yes.

9178. I think you must take it for granted that the Government could not afford to lend money at less than 4 per cent. upon a business of that kind, therefore my question must be, whether you think they would agree to pay 4 per cent. in order to have the advantage of becoming owners or having perpetual tenancy of the land?—There is a difference between perpetual tenancy and ownership, in my opinion.

9179. Yes?—The one dies out with the life and the other goes to the successors. I expect a man going for the owner of a bit of land would be quite willing to pay more to become owner, to have it go down to his sons and daughters, than he would to pay for it to be a tenant. I think that is the feeling in Scotland mostly where I have been.

9180. What is the difficulty now which prevents a man from becoming a small owner or small tenant?—The only difficulty is the want of money.

9181. Do you think that the country ought to lend money to any particular business to enable people to go into it?—Yes.

9182. Do you think they ought to lend it to all businesses?—No, not to all businesses.

9183. Why do you think that they should lend it to a labourer on the land rather than to a labourer in the towns?—I do not say that the country should lend money for anything unless they have good security, and it would only be on good security that they would lend money on the land.

9184. Do you think that the country should lend money, provided that the security is good, for any purpose to working people?—Yes.

9185. Therefore, if good security could be found, you would lend money to any working men in the towns to go into any business?—I do not know that you can have any business so good a security as the land; you have always the land there.

9186. But the land does not always keep at the same price?—No, we know that in Scotland; it has diminished in value greatly.

9187. I do not know whether the diminution has been as great in Scotland as in England; what is the greatest diminution that has taken place that you know of in land?—In the case of large farms in Scotland the rents have been reduced about 50 per cent.

9188. Then if you lent money upon 100 *l.* worth of land, which subsequently became worth 50 *l.*, there would be a good deal of risk, would there not?—Yes.

9189. Would not that be rather a risky transaction?—I did not quite follow you.

9190. You say that land has gone down 50 per cent.; suppose that the local authority had bought land at the highest price, at 100 *l.*, and then it had gone down 50 per cent., it would only be worth 50 *l.* now?—Yes.

9191. They would lose the money they had lent upon it, would they not?—But we have land at about its lowest just now.

9192. How do you know that?—I have an idea that it cannot come down much more.

Chairman—continued.

9193. But it would not be safe to lend money on a private opinion of that kind, would it?—No.

9194. I want you to see that in any transaction of this kind there must be risk?—Yes.

9195. Why should working men, for instance, who are not agricultural labourers, risk their money for the benefit of the agricultural labourers; supposing, for instance, that in your district the local authority represents the whole of the people in the district, some of them are agricultural labourers, and some of them, I suppose, working men, others are clerks and people in poor circumstances; why should these people be called upon to undertake a risk for the benefit of one particular class?—One particular class alone does not wish for the holdings; there are hundreds of people in the towns who would be glad to go back to the country if they could get a holding.

9196. But taking your district as an instance, I suppose that the majority of the population do not want small holdings?—The majority of the population do want small holdings.

9197. At all events, there is a minority that does not want them?—I have met very few who were able to say that small holdings would not be a benefit to the country.

9198. But does every single man in your district want a small holding?—No.

9199. Then there are some who do not; why should they be asked to risk their money?—Every single man is in favour of small holdings, knowing that they produce so much more than those of larger size that they would get the benefit.

9200. You think that in your district, at any rate, the people who elect the local authority would be in favour of risking their money upon the purchase of land?—Yes, upon a fair value.

9201. Of course the fair value varies from time to time?—Yes.

9202. Then when they had bought the land what would they do with it?—Cultivate it.

9203. The local authority I am speaking of; it is the local authority that is to buy the land?—Yes; I beg pardon.

9204. What do you suggest that the local authority should do with the land when it has bought it?—Let it out to small holders.

9205. Do you propose that they should let it or sell it?—Whichever they find the most remunerative.

9206. Take, first, the case of selling; would you require that the person who purchases should pay a sum down?—Yes.

9207. How much; what proportion?—I am in favour of their paying a fourth of the money down.

9208. Then he would have to pay 4 per cent. on the remainder as a loan?—Yes.

9209. Do you think that if that were offered it would be largely taken advantage of?—It would depend greatly upon the financial position of the people and the extent of land offered to them.

9210. I will assume that the land offered to them is in plots suitable to their needs; my question is whether you think that there would

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Chairman—continued.

be many people in a financial position to take advantage of that offer?—Our present crofters in Perthshire are very anxious to become purchasers of a larger amount of land than they have at the present time, and also to become owners.

9211. And do you think that they would be able and willing to become owners on those terms, paying one-fourth down and 4 per cent. upon the balance?—I believe they would pay one-fourth down; I cannot speak for the whole community about the 4 per cent. on the balance.

9212. But it would not be fair on the other ratepayers that they should borrow money at less than would repay the others?—No.

9213. It would not be fair that the ratepayers should make a loss out of the transaction?—No.

9214. And if they are to lend their credit, they must be quite certain that they will get their money back?—Yes.

9215. Therefore the purchaser would have to pay 4 per cent. in order to make the local authority safe?—Yes.

9216. But you are not certain whether he would be able to do that?—I am not certain; but I know that they would strain a point a great deal more to become purchasers than they would to become tenants; the making of them tenants causes the land to go back into large farms, the same as it is at the present time.

9217. You say you think that the local authority should also have power to let the land?—Yes.

9218. Do not you think that that would be rather a risky transaction; they would have no guarantee then, you see; they would have nothing but the security of the land; in the case of a sale, you have said the man must put down one-fourth of the purchase-money, that would be security; but in the case of a lease, he would not put down anything?—But I would expect that the local authority would not purchase land until the district said that it required it.

9219. But a district might require it, and yet might find that it was not able to pay for it after it got it. Supposing, for instance, that you took a farm, and that then the price of produce went down, and you could not pay your rent, it would not be your fault, but would be the loss of the local authority?—You find very few small holders and crofters who are not able to pay their rent.

9220. But within the last few years have not the courts reduced the rents of the crofters very materially?—There is no Crofters Act in the counties that I come from.

9221. And where there is a Crofters Act they have reduced rents very considerably; in some cases as much as 50 per cent.?—Yes.

9222. Supposing that the local authority had been the landlord instead of a private individual, they would have lost that 50 per cent.?—Yes.

9223. The ratepayers would have lost it?—Yes.

9224. Then is not that a very risky transaction?—Well, it is risky.

9225. In your view has there been any diminution in the number of small holders?—Yes, there has been a great diminution.

9226. Is that in your experience?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

9227. And what district do you refer to?—To every district in Scotland.

9228. But do you know every district in Scotland?—I have been over most of Scotland.

9229. Have you been out as a labourer in different parts of Scotland?—No, but I have been Secretary of the Ploughmen's Union for some time, and have been over most of Scotland.

9230. To what do you attribute that diminution?—One cause is the game. Game requires solitude.

9231. The small holdings have been thrown into large holdings, in order to protect the game; is that what you mean?—Yes. Game requires solitude; the crofter and small holder is not as a rule very favourable to the game living off him; therefore if the game has to be preserved the fewer people there are on the land the better.

9232. Has the preservation of game effected a reduction of small holdings in all parts of Scotland?—In all parts of Scotland, so far as I can learn.

9233. Are there any other causes for the diminution of which you speak?—Yes. When the leases are out, perhaps the steading will require to be repaired with offices. A larger farmer who will offer a rent for it generally gets it, because he has his farm buildings already, and it generally saves the proprietor the necessary expense of building a stead to the holding.

9234. The small holdings would be more expensive to the proprietor in the way of buildings than large ones?—In the way that they build on small holdings in some instances they are more expensive; but the idea that I have of the holding is, that a man who is only able to take a small holding does not require a mansion to live in.

9235. But we are speaking now of the causes of the diminution in their numbers; you say that one cause is that at the expiry of the lease the repairs would be heavy?—Yes.

9236. And that that affects small holdings more than large ones?—Yes.

9237. And makes it less profitable to the proprietor to have small holdings than large ones?—With the large increase of rent that the small holders pay over the large farmers it would ultimately repay the proprietor.

9238. But if it is more profitable to a proprietor to have small holdings than large ones, why does he not have them?—The great difficulty is the want of means.

9239. But where he has already got the buildings there is no expenditure for making them; but you say that even where there are small holdings now with buildings, the tendency is to throw them into large holdings?—Yes.

9240. Surely that must be because it is more profitable to the proprietor; he would not do it at a loss, would he?—I am saying in cases where the offices require to be rebuilt; that is my contention.

9241. Of course, with the large farms, the offices sometimes require to be rebuilt, do they not?—Yes.

9242. But again, the expenditure upon the small holdings would be out of proportion; would be

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Chairman—continued.

be more in proportion to the expenditure on buildings in a large farm?—That is generally thought to be the case.

9243. If that is the case it would be the case also when the small holdings were held by a local authority, would it not?—Yes.

9244. Therefore that would be another reason why the local authority would have to ask a higher rent?—Yes, it would require a percentage for the building.

9245. They would have to put aside a percentage for repairs to buildings?—Yes.

9246. Do you propose that in that case the local authority should do what the landlord now does, undertake the charge of the buildings?—Yes; I would be in favour of a local authority undertaking the charge of the buildings.

9247. The landlord, we have been told, is satisfied to get 2½ per cent. clear?—I cannot say anything in that direction.

9248. But the local authority would have to get 4 per cent.?—Yes.

9249. And I think it would have to get more than 4 per cent. if it had to pay for buildings; 4 per cent. is calculated solely upon the money lent upon the land?—Yes.

9250. Therefore, the tenant of the local authority would have to pay very much more than he pays to a landlord if the ratepayers are to be saved from loss?—Yes. But the idea of having a home is very strong in the mind of Scotchmen.

9251. You think that the temptation to have a home and land of his own would induce him to make that sacrifice?—To make a great sacrifice; at any rate, we have from 70,000 to 80,000 agricultural labourers in Scotland with no home.

9252. Are there many of those agricultural labourers who could pay one-fourth of the purchase-money down?—Yes, if the holdings were graduated to suit their position.

9253. Did you hear the evidence of the last witness?—Yes.

9254. He told us that he did not think there was any demand for purchase except in connection with villages and small towns; do you agree with that?—No, there is also a demand in the country districts.

9255. And that the money would be found if facilities were offered?—Yes.

9256. In your experience, do you think that the few small holdings at present in existence have a larger or smaller production than the large farms per acre?—The small farms have a larger production per acre than the large farms.

9257. Have you any facts to prove that, or is it only an opinion?—I have facts.

9258. What facts have you?—I have the fact that Alexander Stewart, of Collace, produces 12 boles of oats per acre on his holding; the farmer adjoining him says he never had more than eight.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

9259. How many bushels is a bole?—Two hundred and sixty-four pounds, or nearly six bushels.

Chairman.

9260. What is the land; is it of exactly the same quality?—Yes, the very same quality.

9261. Is this an exceptional case?—I find it to be so over all the country where the small holder has facilities equal, that is to say, where the land is as good as that of the large holding. There are 56 crofters in the parish of Collace, owning 300 Scotch acres of land; that is, every four acres is equal to five acres imperial, that pay to the proprietors of Dunsinane 900 *l.*, less 10 per cent. granted two years ago; they have 70 milch cows, they have 20 horses, and a great number of poultry and pigs. I consider those 56 crofters of more value on that 300 acres of land to the community generally than six or eight farmers there holding 500 and 600 acres each.

9262. To what do you attribute the large production on the small holdings?—A large farmer has not time to go into every corner with the plough; therefore he loses a great deal; and any one going through the country will see on every large farm that the ends of the ridges are not ploughed; but what the crofter cannot reach with the plough he can reach with the spade.

9263. He puts more labour on than the farmer can afford to do?—Yes, and he is always working for himself; he knows that he spends his whole time on his holding, therefore he is tenant and labourer; and with the help of his family he is able to do a great deal; and the very soot of his chimney and the water from the byres are carried to the land, whereas the farmer has not time to do such things.

9264. Of course if he produces more he could afford to pay a higher rent?—Yes.

9265. What sized holding do you think most suitable for small holdings?—I would make them from five acres up to fifty acres.

9266. And what sized holding do you think would enable a man to subsist, himself and his family?—From 40 to 50 acres; and in the vicinity of towns they could subsist on far less.

9267. Supposing that a man wants a farm of from 40 to 50 acres, is there any difficulty in his obtaining it?—Yes; because when one is in the market there are 50 or 60 after it.

9268. Then there is no difficulty whatever in letting small farms in Scotland?—There is no difficulty whatever, so far as I can learn.

9269. Can you give us any reason why the owners do not cut up their estates into small farms, because, as I understand, they would be able to get a much higher interest for their money, the rent well paid, and the land better cultivated; how is it that they do not divide their farms more?—Landlords tell me that they have not the money.

9270. They cannot afford to put up the buildings?—They cannot afford to put up the buildings.

9271. But if they were to let the land and allow the tenants to put up the buildings, would not that answer?—Many of the tenants who are able to stock land would not be able to put up buildings.

9272. It is of necessity that they should have the buildings put up for them?—Yes; but then there is the risk of putting up buildings to the proprietor.

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Chairman—continued.

9273. But if they bought land under the system which you have suggested from the local authority they would have to put up buildings then?—Would not the local authority have power to do so?

9274. Not in case they sold the land?—Would they not also have building powers?

9275. That has not been proposed?—A small holding is incomplete without a building.

9276. But the proposal has been this: there may have been proposals to go beyond it, but the proposals we have been chiefly considering have been to buy the land, and sell the land to small owners; then the small owner would himself put up such buildings as are suitable for his purpose from time to time?—We have a good many who have done it in Perth, but they have lost by it; but they would not lose by it if the local authority sold the land to them.

9277. Of course a building is not nearly such a good security as the land?—The building decays in value.

9278. And the land is always there?—Yes.

9279. And if the land is well cultivated it may even improve?—Yes.

9280. Whereas the building is sure to deteriorate?—Yes.

9281. Therefore the moment that the local authority had anything to do with the buildings it would run a much greater risk than if it had only to do with the land?—It would require to have security that it would get so much per cent. for its money. There is a style of building for a small holding (*handing in a sketch*) costing from 140 *l.* to 260 *l.*

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

9282. For what sized holdings is that suitable?—For holdings of from 20 to 60 acres

Chairman.

9283. You know that Government do lend money to proprietors for the purpose of enabling them to make improvements in the way of buildings?—We would be quite content if the proprietors would build.

9284. Do you know what interest the Government finds it necessary to charge the proprietors?—No.

9285. Will you take it from me that it is over 6 per cent.?—Surely they can give it at less now.

9286. The interest and repayment is over 6 per cent. for a period of years?—Twenty years ago they got it for that.

9287. What I want to point out to you is this: that if the Government makes this rate they have made it upon the assumption that it is the lowest rate at which they can lend money without losing?—Yes.

9288. We must take it that it is the lowest rate at which they can lend money without losing, and the local authority would probably have to charge more than the Government, because it does not borrow its money quite as cheaply as the Government does?—It would then be as well to have it direct from Government.

9289. You would not propose that the Government should be lending money to labourers all over the country, would you?—Except they pushed the Ashbourne Act.

Chairman—continued.

9290. Upon the principle of the Ashbourne Act?—Not on the principle of the Ashbourne Act, but the local authority having the power under the Ashbourne Act in the same manner.

9291. Under the Ashbourne Act the Land Commission advances the money, retaining a fourth as security?—Yes.

9292. And requiring repayment in 50 years?—Yes; 49 years.

9293. But they do not put up buildings?—Do they not?

9294. No; therefore I think we must put aside the Ashbourne Act. I want you to consider whether you think that a tenant could afford to pay something between 6 and 7 per cent. on the cost of building in order to recoup the local authority?—It would be just as well to pay it to the local authority as to pay it to the proprietor.

9295. But does he pay as much as that to the proprietor; the proprietor is content with a smaller interest?—I know some proprietors charging 8 per cent.

9296. That is rather exceptional, is it not?—Yes.

9297. We have been told that the proprietor does not expect to get more on the whole of his capital than 2½ per cent.?—Eight per cent. on his building, I mean.

9298. On the whole of the capital invested in the land?—I say on the buildings; the farm-buildings newly put up.

9299. How much would be got upon the farm-buildings, newly put up, upon a labourer's cottage, for instance. How much per week do you pay for a labourer's cottage in Scotland in a purely agricultural district?—That is a very difficult question to answer. In Scotland the agricultural labourer pays for his cottage in his labour.

9300. He gives so many days' labour, do you mean?—He is engaged for so much a year, cottage included; that is how he pays for his cottage.

9301. He does not pay separately for the cottage?—No; his engagement, in fact, is something like a lottery.

9302. What is the rate of wages for agricultural labourers?—From 26 *l.* to 30 *l.* a year.

9303. Does that include any food?—Meal and milk.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9304. Besides these wages?—Yes.

Chairman.

9305. Supposing that a labourer got 10 *s.* a week, that would be 26 *l.*?—Yes.

9306. And a cottage free?—Yes.

9307. And meal and milk?—Yes. I am only speaking for one district; there are some districts in the south where they get grain, barley, and oats, and wheat; but in the Midlands, in counties such as Perthshire and Forfarshire, they get meal and milk with a house.

9308. And out of that do you think many of them could save enough to take a small holding?—Very

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Chairman—continued.

—Very few of them could save until their family grows up to bring in something.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

9309. With regard to the Ashbourne Act, you were saying just now that you thought something could be done by an extension of it; are you aware that under the Ashbourne Act money is only advanced to existing tenants?—I was not aware of that.

9310. That was the difficulty which I thought was not in your mind at the time?—But the people of Scotland are beginning to think that they have done as much for the nation as they have done in Ireland, and they do not see the force of money being spent in Ireland and not getting any grant from Government themselves.

9311. Will you tell me what is the object of your Ploughman's Union?—Liberty and freedom, and the advance of the cause of small holdings and allotments in Scotland?

9312. Complete liberty in small holdings?—Yes.

9313. You appeared to be surprised just now when the Right honourable Chairman told you that probably the rate of interest which you would have to pay for an advance would be altogether 4 per cent.?—Yes, I was surprised.

9314. At what price did you imagine you would be able to borrow?—About 3½ per cent.

9315. Would you mind telling us by what means you imagined that you were going to get it at 3½ per cent.?—I just had an idea of what other people were getting for their money.

9316. You thought you were going to get it from somebody for that?—I expect the Government is able to borrow money as cheaply as any other party; but I am led to believe under the local authority that it is not the Government that borrows the money but they.

9317. What is your idea of the local authority that should undertake this duty?—The local authority under the new county councils.

9318. There is no such local authority in existence at present?—There are local authorities in Scotland.

9319. The parish authorities?—Yes.

9320. Do you think that authority would be the best for the purpose of carrying out any legislation of this kind?—Yes, thoroughly constituted.

9321. Is it not thoroughly constituted now?—I do not know how it is constituted directly; our parochial authorities are somewhat under a cloud. I do not know really in Scotland what they are.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9322. You spoke of the whole of Scotland, but I think you have a special personal knowledge of Forfarshire and Perthshire?—Yes, I was born in Forfarshire.

9323. Are there at present any small properties cultivated by their owners in those counties?—Peasant proprietary is nearly unknown so far as I can learn. There are a few ownerships in the parish of Barry, but they are not cultivated by their owners; some of them extend to 30 and 40 acres.

9324. Within the memory of man were there

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

any considerable number of small ownerships?—I do not know.

9325. As regards tenancies there is a great prevalence of large farms in those counties?—Yes.

9326. In Forfarshire there are some very large farms, are there not?—Yes.

9327. Are they prosperous or unprosperous now?—The large farms are not very prosperous. Their main cultivation is corn, and hay, and barley, and wheat.

9328. Without going into details they are not very prosperous?—No, they are not very prosperous.

9329. Apart from crofts, are there any considerable number of small farms, at the present moment, in Forfarshire and Perthshire?—Yes, a considerable number of them.

9330. About what proportion of land should you say was held by small farms paying 70 *l.* and 80 *l.* and under?—It is very difficult to answer that question, because it is very difficult to get the information.

9331. In a rough way, do you think that a considerable proportion of the land is held in those farms?—No, I think the largest proportion of the land is held by large farmers.

9332. Are there any parts of Forfarshire and Perthshire where small farms generally prevail?—Yes.

9333. Where?—In Forfarshire, in the parishes of Monikie and Carmylye, on Muirside of Kinnell, in the parish of Menmuir, and in the Edzell district there are a few also.

9334. What kind of size are these small farms generally?—They range from two up to 70 acres.

9335. You would not call two acres a farm?—No, that is a croft merely. It would be difficult to define the sizes, because they are of all sizes; and generally, where a small holder has not been disturbed, he holds his land by what they call a Scotch acre.

9336. But what I mean is this: are there a large number of what I should call small farms, that is to say, agricultural tenancies, where the cultivator lives by the farm alone in the places you have mentioned?—Yes, there are a good few.

9337. What is about the size of a holding on which you think that a man and his family can live?—With good land a man can live on 30 acres.

9338. Of average land?—Yes, good land.

9339. Are there still a good many of such farms in Forfarshire and Perthshire?—Yes.

9340. And wherever they fall vacant there is a great demand for them?—Yes.

9341. Are any landlords making experiments to multiply small farms?—Yes.

9342. Can you give us any instances of that?—The late Lord of Panmure, Lord Dalhousie, and Lord Kinnaird have built a few.

9343. Have those turned out successfully?—On the estate of Panmure they seem to work very successfully; they have had two or three years; on Lord Kinnaird's estate in the carse of Gowrie they have only been built something over a year.

9344. Lord Dalhousie made some experiments of that kind?—Yes, he built three in the parish

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

of Barry, and there are a considerable number in Monikie and Carmylye.

9345. Has the experiment he has made with regard to the creation of small farms been successful?—He has renewed the buildings of many of them on his estate in Monikie and Carmylye; these parishes where small holdings were formerly.

9346. Is the tenant required to pay an additional rent on account of new buildings?—Yes; he is required to pay so much per cent.

9347. Does he do it willingly?—Yes.

9348. How much per cent. does he usually pay?—There are differences; they pay 5 per cent. on the Panmure Estate. What they pay on the estate of Lord Kinnaird I am unable to state; I could not get that information.

9349. You were asked about 6 per cent., which you said was very high; but 5 per cent. you think would be a reasonable per-centage for buildings?—Yes.

9350. But as regards the experiment in new small holdings which Lord Dalhousie has made, do you think that has been successful?—Yes.

9351. Could you give us any particulars about the holdings?—Nothing except that the working men who have taken them have them at 1 *l.* an acre, including interest and buildings.

9352. Does that pay the landlord?—In the links of Barry it was land lying dormant before it was turned into holdings. About 30 years ago there were 30 small holdings on it, and that was all put out of cultivation and returned back into cultivation.

9353. How do they come to be put out of cultivation?—To let the game get room to run, so far as I can understand it.

9354. Was there game upon the links of Barry?—Yes.

9355. What kind of game?—Rabbits and pheasants.

9356. In order to cultivate the rabbits they were up?—The buildings were the people's own, and when the buildings fell I believe the proprietors did not offer to build them; and in some instances, the family being away, they were allowed to fall.

9357. Were the tenants not willing to rebuild themselves?—They did not generally fall until the oldest tenant in possession had died.

9358. Taking Forfarshire and Perthshire generally, has there been, within the memory of man, a great diminution in the number of small holdings?—Yes.

9359. Can you give us any remarkable instances?—There were on the estate of Murthly at one time over 50 holdings; there are now only 14 small tenancies.

9360. How did their diminution take place?—Most part of the buildings were the people's own, and when they fell they did not wish to rebuild them in some instances, and some were unable to rebuild them.

9361. In Perthshire are there any conspicuous cases where game has had a great deal to do with the question?—It is difficult to say. On Logiealmond there has been a diminution in the number of small holdings, and at Taymount there was also a great diminution.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

9362. Whose estate is that?—Lord Mansfield's.

9363. To what do you attribute that diminution?—To the falling of the buildings. Most of the land is still in occupation, but put into large farms.

9364. In recent years has that tendency to put small holdings into large diminished?—Not very much; I do not think it has diminished at all; they are still putting them into large holdings.

9365. Apart from small farms, are there a very large number of what you call crofts in the neighbourhood of villages in Forfarshire and Perthshire?—There are a good many; there are some what they call acre lands about Blackford.

9366. How are they cultivated?—They are cultivated by yearly tenants; they just have their feu and a small piece of land.

9367. What kind of rents do they pay?—From 30 *s.* to 2 *l.* 5 *s.* an acre.

9368. There are parts of those counties where they grow a great deal of fruit, are there not?—Yes, and on the estate of Dunsinane they have greatly entered into the cultivation of strawberries. It costs about 20 *l.* a year to put them down, but after they have been put down they pay the tenant something like 25 *l.*, taking it on an average of five years.

9369. In Blair Gowrie they grow a large quantity of strawberries?—Yes, every kind of fruit.

9370. And they are grown by these small holders?—Yes.

9371. Do they send large quantities to the English markets?—I do not know that they send them to the English markets, a great deal of it goes to Dundee to be made into preserve.

9372. What kind of rent do the people pay for strawberry grounds at Blair Gowrie, Dunsinane, and other places?—At Dunsinane they pay 2 *l.* 14 *s.* 6 *d.* an acre.

9373. And about Blair Gowrie do you know what they pay?—No, I cannot give you what they pay in Blair Gowrie, because some pay one thing, and some another, and it is difficult to fix an average.

9374. Are not some of them very heavily rented?—Yes, some of them are very heavily rented, so far as I can learn.

9375. And in those cases, where they own the buildings, does the tenant or the strawberry grower live in the village?—The buildings belong to the as tenant in some instances; but in the instances where people live in the villages they have no house near the ground.

9376. You have said that the crofters want larger crofts, and also want to become owners?—Yes.

9377. Supposing that they cannot afford both, would the man in most instances prefer to get a larger holding, or to become the owner of a small one?—Most of the crofters in Perthshire wish to become owners; they are only yearly tenants; many of them built their own buildings from the foundation, and they are liable to be dispossessed at any time. Some have drained their land, and those who have not built their own

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

own buildings have re-rooted them once or twice.

9378. And you think that a man would rather become the owner of a 30-acre farm than tenant of a 150-acre farm?—Yes, I think so.

9379. That is the general feeling?—Yes.

9380. With regard to advances by the State or by some competent authority, you were asked whether you would advocate an advance for all trades; do not you think that, for social reasons, there are some very special causes for assisting people to become small proprietors that do not exist in the case of other trades?—Yes; but under good security I also mentioned.

9381. In the parish of Barry, about Carnoustie, are there a great many small holdings?—Yes; people having an acre or two of ground without a house; living in the villages, cultivating carrots.

9382. They develop the cultivation of carrots and such profitable things very much, do they not?—The small holdings will not pay at the excessive rents they have unless they cultivate fruit.

9383. Are there any other districts that you know of, apart from the Highland district on which small holdings prevail?—Such as Wigtownshire, where there are some holdings, some crofts.

9384. Have you found that in Wigtownshire and those counties there is any large demand for small holdings?—Not so much in Wigtownshire; they seem to be in poorer circumstances there.

9385. Which are the counties that you know, where there is a large demand?—Forfarshire and Perthshire, and such as Haddingtonshire, where there is scarcely a holding within the reach of the working man; it is one of the best agricultural counties in Scotland.

9386. In East Lothian there is scarcely a small holding, you say?—Until he has acquired the capital to stock a three or four pair horse farm, a man need never think of raising his position beyond that of a working man.

9387. Is that because there are no small farms short of that available?—Very few.

9388. Do you find, amongst the East Lothian farm servants, that there is a desire to have small holdings?—Yes.

9389. Have you got any plan by which that object could be achieved?—I have no direct plan at the present time; but they are the men who would be most suitable for holdings, seeing that instead of the parent being in the employment of one, and his family in the employment of another, they are all employed by one employer, and under a careful mother, all dropping money into one exchequer; and in a very short time they acquire a good deal of money.

9390. But they cannot get small farms?—No.

9391. I take the case of East Lothian; have you any suggestion to make by which their getting small farms could be facilitated?—Not unless you give power to the local authority to get the land.

9392. Would you go the length of giving authority to the local authority to take the land to let it in small farms?—Yes, or do something to induce proprietors to make their land into small holdings.

Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

9393. What would you do to induce proprietors to make their land into small holdings?—Offer them cheap money.

9394. Do you think that they would be willing to do it if they got cheap money?—I think so.

9395. Rents have come down very heavily indeed in East Lothian, have they not?—Yes.

9396. And you think landlords, if they got cheap money, might be inclined to do something towards creating small holdings?—Yes; because the land is of the very best quality in East Lothian.

9397. At how low a rate do you think the State could afford to lend money?—That is not for me to say; that is for those who have the management of the affairs of the State; I am only a unit.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*.

9398. You said that the land in Scotland had been very much reduced in rent; some of it as low as 50 per cent.?—Yes.

9399. Does that apply to good land?—Yes.

9400. And good farms?—Yes.

9401. I suppose 50 per cent. is the exception?—I know several large farms; I have one instance in Castle Gowrie that paid 800 *l.* for the last 19 years, and when it came into the market there was only one offer for it by the present farmer; he offered 400 *l.*, and got it.

9402. What is your experience as to the reduction of rent on small holdings up to 50 acres?—There is very little reduction in rent; but there are some cases where the reduction has been considerable. I have an instance here of Mr. James Leney, Southfield, on the estate of Kilgraston; at one time he paid for 50 acres 97 *l.*; in 1882 he got it reduced to 75 *l.*, and in 1886 he got it reduced to 1 *l.* per acre; he has it for 50 *l.* now.

9403. Speaking generally, have the reductions in the rent on small holdings been anything like on the scale of the reduction in the rent on large farms?—No, they have not.

9404. You were asked why public money should not be applied to the general tradesmen as well as to the agricultural labourer. I take it that you draw a distinction between men employed on land and men employed in towns?—Yes.

9405. Is that on account of the general good to the community, and the increase of production?—Yes.

9406. I take it that the increase of production on land makes the general trade of the country better, and benefits the whole of the community?—It does.

9407. You instanced that by the 56 crofters at Dunsinnan, and what they do on the land, and the superior produce they secure as compared with what big farmers on the same amount of land could do?—Yes.

9408. Do you attach any importance, socially, to the creation of small holdings?—Yes; great importance.

9409. Do you think that it would stop, in any degree, the influx of rural population into our towns?—Yes.

9410. Have you any reason for thinking that

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

any considerable number of men in large towns would go back to the land if they had any prospect of obtaining small holdings on favourable terms?—Yes, hundreds.

9411. You stated that the difficulty was with regard to huildings; do you think that in the case of provision of small holdings of land any considerable number of small holders would be able to live in the adjacent villages and not on their holdings?—That is a difficult matter; because it seems to be more difficult for a holder to live if he is far from his land, inasmuch as the small holders in general are going greatly into the fruit growing, and they must be very near it to look after it.

9412. What do you consider would be the cost of a suitable dwelling and buildings for, say 30 acres of land?—About 250 *l.*; and that is only giving the holder a common working man's house; not a mansion. I know some small holders at the present time who have houses which they are not able to furnish. One in particular told me that he filled his house with furniture and had nothing with which to stock the land.

9413. Do you think that if some means were offered by which a small holder would be required to find the fourth of that 250 *l.*, and to pay 5 per cent. on the remainder, say for between 40 and 50 years, which payment paid back capital and interest, and from that time the whole building would be his own, such a proposal would be accepted?—Of course you are one per cent. above the Right honourable Chairman.

9414. I am speaking of buildings only?—For buildings they would be quite willing to pay 5 per cent. because buildings are things that decay; they are not like the land.

9415. Do you think that that would overcome the difficulty that you have been speaking of with regard to buildings?—Yes.

9416. So that if a man should become a small cultivating owner of say 30 acres of land, on which he had paid a fourth, and paid 4 per cent. on the remainder of the purchase-money, and in addition to that he could borrow money to the extent of three-fourths of the cost of the buildings, for which he would have to pay 5 per cent for a certain number of years, and then all payments would cease, do you think that the two operations together would get over the difficulties of the provision of cultivating ownerships?—Yes.

9417. You spoke of a local authority if properly constituted; should you consider that the proposed parochial authorities in Scotland under the County Government Bill when they are constituted, which are elected popularly by household suffrage, and vote by ballot, a suitable authority?—I have not looked into the parochial authorities in Scotland under the County Government Bill.

9418. Should you suppose that any parochial authority, popularly elected, would be what you mean by a popularly constituted body?—Yes.

9419. That would satisfy you as administering any Act for the creation of small holdings?—Yes.

Sir *Walter Foster.*

9420. You gave us some interesting information about Scotch agricultural labourers; have they any land attached to these cottages?—They have a small garden.

9421. How big?—They vary in size from 12 yards square to 16.

9422. None of them have an acre?—No, not in my experience.

9423. A few have, I suppose?—If they had then they would pay a rental. I know some who have, and it is a very difficult position to be in.

9424. But if they get it they are more prosperous and better off than others who have not?—Yes.

9425. And more likely to save money to go into a small holding?—Yes.

9426. You told us about the small holdings that did exist; that they probably went out of existence, because the landlord did not want to spend money on renewing buildings when they become decayed?—In some instances the landlord was unable to spend money.

9427. He was unable or unwilling; he did not spend the money?—Yes.

9428. How was it under those circumstances that the tenants were not willing to keep their buildings in better repair themselves; why did they not do something of that kind?—There are some of them in Perthshire at the present day whose houses are over 100 years old; they were built by themselves, and they hold land from the proprietor as yearly tenants and are liable to be dispossessed. In a few years time these buildings will fall, and they will, perhaps, not be allowed to build.

9429. Then it was the want of any security of tenure that made them go out rather than spend their money in re-building?—Yes.

9430. You say that another cause of the decrease of small holdings was the preservation of game; that small holdings and people living on them were injurious to game?—Yes, because it reduced the price of shootings; in fact they could scarcely be let where there was a number of them.

9431. Then has the effect of the diminution of small holdings, from these and other causes, been injurious socially to the people?—Yes.

9432. In what way?—Because when an agricultural labourer is in the vicinity of small holdings, and in close community with the small holders, he generally becomes more intelligent. He sees something by which he can put his foot on the ladder and climb to the top of the tree; a stepping stone from a crofter to be a farmer. Where there are no crofts there is nothing for them; they are birds of passage; there is no national sentiment within their heart. In the absence of a home a man has very little to look for.

9433. In a word, a man is more saving, more sober, and more hopeful, when he is in the neighbourhood of small holdings?—Yes; and more intelligent.

9434. And where the small holdings have disappeared you have a lower social condition of people, and more pauperism?—Yes.

9435. If you were to put before people you are

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Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

are acquainted with in Scotland some alternative schemes, such as these, which do you think they would take; would they be willing to take the land under perpetual feu rents as compared with leasehold, having security of tenure and paying a landlord rent?--I do not think that any of them would object to have security of tenure, but I think they would prefer to be proprietors.

9436. Supposing that you could buy land at 25 *l.* an acre, and you had a farm of 16 acres, which would come to 400 *l.*, would an agricultural labourer be able to pay 100 *l.* down and 12 *l.* a year in perpetuity?—Yes; a good many agricultural labourers would be quite willing and able to pay 100 *l.* down.

9437. And you do not think that would cripple him in stocking his farm and going on for the first few years?—It does not require a great deal now to stock a farm; horses are cheap.

9438. Do you think that 12 *l.* a year rent going on always would be an injury to him; do you think that he would get to feel that he ought not to pay that rent, and would resent it?—He would take an obligation to pay it before he got it.

9439. Do you suppose that his son or grandson would begin to look upon that rent as an unjust thing to exact from them?—I do not know.

9440. On the other hand, do you think they would prefer a system by which they would pay a sum somewhat bigger, and have it terminate at the end of 40 years?—I think they would prefer that system of paying so much over and above

Sir *Walter Foster*—continued.

the rent-charge, ranging over a number of years, until they had paid up capital and interest, and become proprietors.

9441. I gather from you, then, that the peasantry in Scotland, the agricultural labourers and small holders, really would like to be absolute proprietors of their land?—Yes.

9442. Do you not think that there would be a danger, under those circumstances, of these small holdings becoming consolidated again into big ones?—Giving the local authority that power, you would require to give the local authority also power to retake possession of the land.

9443. But you could not prevent other people buying it in the open market?—But you could prevent them from consolidating with others.

9444. It might be possible, if you kept up a perpetual rental to the local authority, to give them the right of pre-emption, and the right of occupying the land again?—Yes.

9445. But if you made these holders absolute owners with absolute rights, you could not control the land so as to prevent its re-accumulating in large parcels?—The difficulty in making them perpetual owners is that the land does not return anything to the State at all; it would be freed from its obligations. Land has obligations as well as other property.

9446. Then you do not want them to be perpetual owners?—Yes; I do want them to be perpetual owners, but still paying a small or superior rent to the local authority.

9447. You want them to be under the local authority in any case?—Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH JONES, called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

9448. I THINK you are a solicitor, and you also own some land in Cardiganshire?—I was a solicitor.

9449. And you have had a very considerable experience of the agricultural conditions of Cardiganshire?—Yes.

9450. Will you just describe them; in what way is the county divided as regards the size of the estates?—There are two large estates of about 10,000 *l.* a year; the rest is either in the hands of the occupiers themselves, or in the hands of smaller estates of from 500 *l.* to 3,000 *l.* a year.

9451. Are there many small owners and occupiers?—I should say at any rate one to every three. There is one district about five miles by six miles occupied almost exclusively by small freeholders.

9452. And what is the size of these small occupations?—The largest, I may say, almost in the county does not exceed 200 *l.* a year rent; they run up from one acre to 200, or thereabouts.

9453. What is the average?—The average, I should say, is 60 or 70 acres.

9454. Were you concerned in the transfer of these properties?—Largely.

9455. What has been the average purchasing

Chairman—continued.

price?—The purchasing price has invariably reached 30 years' purchase, and it has often gone as high as 35 years, and upon the rent frequently more; but at the rack-rent often 30 years' purchase.

9456. Does the purchaser find the money in cash?—The purchaser invariably finds a third or a fourth in cash.

9457. How does he get the rest?—He borrows the rest at 4 per cent.

9458. Under those circumstances the purchaser must stand at a higher rent than he would do if he were a tenant?—Undoubtedly.

9459. Is that a disadvantage?—It is.

9460. In spite of that does the demand for purchase continue?—It does.

9461. Do you think that there is an advantage in the occupiers being themselves the owners of the land?—Very great.

9462. What advantages do you find in that?—They more readily expend their money in the improvement of the land and erecting buildings; socially it greatly improves them as men.

9463. Do these purchasers deal with the buildings themselves?—We have throughout, and have had for generations past, buildings upon all these

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Chairman—continued.

small holdings; but they invariably enlarge and improve them.

9464. Of course, in this case, they have absolute security of tenure?—They have.

9465. Is the insecurity of tenure in other cases felt to be a serious disadvantage?—Very greatly so.

9466. Have you any examples of that to give?—Yes, I have. On one occasion I remember I acted for a client who had been in possession for 39 years, and upon the faith of a statement made by his landlord, he had reclaimed six acres of land from the river; he had converted a bog of about six acres to grazing land, and had built carthouses and cowhouses upon the property upon the faith of a promise that he would never be removed. Unfortunately his old landlord died, and the farm came into the possession of a young man who was very fond of angling; he took a fancy to a small farm adjoining a fishing river and arranged for the purchase thereof, one of the conditions of which was that he should become a tenant of my client's farm, whereupon this old man was turned out of possession with all his family, and the landlord refused to allow him even a penny-piece.

9467. Is injustice of that kind a matter of very frequent occurrence?—Not of so glaring a character as that; but in other ways I know of many instances where tenants have been led by faith in their prior landlords into expending money upon buildings and improving lands; the landlord has died and the property has been sold, and no compensation frequently has been allowed for those buildings and improvements, and where there has been any compensation allowed it is only such as the proprietor is pleased to grant. I have in my mind an estate which was sold not long ago, in which case I acted, I dare say, for something like half-a-dozen tenants. On the revaluation of estates rents are raised occasionally in consequence of the improvements and outlay of the tenants.

9468. And this uncertainty, I suppose, creates a desire for absolute ownership?—Very much so.

9469. And in the case of absolute ownership the tenant gains an independence which he could not have as long as he remained in his previous position?—He does.

9470. Are these owning occupiers an industrious class?—They are.

9471. Do the family assist in the work?—The farmer himself and his sons do all the out-door work, with the assistance of a servant or two occasionally; and the wife and daughters do all the household work, and even the light outside work.

9472. Do you find them a very respectable class then?—Yes; there is no doubt that there is a very good public opinion existing among them, and they each strive to obtain the good opinion of his neighbour, and to obtain a reputation for shrewdness and common sense.

9473. And do you find that after paying these large sums for the value of the farms they succeed in business?—They do; because they make extra efforts, and they improve the value of the land very considerably from that which it was when they bought it.

9474. Do they make considerable savings?—Comparatively speaking, considerable. I have very frequently laid out for these people 3,000*l.*, 4,000*l.*, and 5,000*l.*; and in some instances I have known people who have saved up to 10,000*l.*

Chairman—continued.

9475. Out of what sized holdings have they made these large savings?—£. 3,000, 4,000*l.*, and 5,000*l.*, not unfrequently from holdings of from 60 to 80 acres.

9476. They must be a very thrifty and economical people?—They are exceedingly so.

9477. I suppose under these circumstances the agricultural depression has been less felt in Wales than it has been elsewhere?—It has been quite as severe in Wales as in any part of England; but owing to previous accumulations they have been able to stand it better there that than elsewhere. They had "something at their back" as they say.

9478. They have had to draw upon their savings during the bad times?—There is no doubt that they have; they have struggled hard not to have to do so, but I have no doubt that in many cases they have had to do so.

9479. I think you told us that the occupying owners were about one to three in Cardiganshire?—Yes.

9480. Can you say what number there are in the whole?—I have looked at the register and made various deductions, and so far as I can see there would be probably from 2,500 to 3,000.

9481. Is there a ready sale for these properties when they came in the market?—Yes; the moment that a property of that kind is put up for sale it is frequently sold.

9482. Has there been much land sold lately?—A considerable amount during the last 20 years within our county, and one or two large estates have been cut up.

9483. When an estate is cut up in that way, who buys the farms?—Very frequently the tenants, and when they do not buy they are invariably bidders.

9484. I should judge from what you say that you approve of the creation of small holdings?—Undoubtedly.

9485. And are desirous to multiply them?—Very much so.

9486. And prefer in all cases ownership to tenancy?—Very much so.

9487. I think you have considered the Small Holdings Bill before Parliament?—Yes, I have looked at it.

9488. Do you approve of it in principle?—I do in principle, but not of the details.

9489. In such a case as yours where there are already many small holdings, would the Bill be of any service?—Yes, in several instances.

9490. Could you give us an illustration?—One, I may point out, is this. The Woods and Forests claim manorial rights over very considerable tracts of mountain, and other land in our county and adjoining counties. There are rights of common or pasturing in neighbouring farms, very frequently farms at a distance. The position is this: that they may graze the land, but they dare not turn a sod, and they have no further claim than grazing. The moment that a fence is put up in steps the Woods and Forests, and prevents any inclosure or any improvement. I may say that I have been engaged on one occasion, at any rate on behalf of the Woods and Forests, in maintaining their claims. There is no doubt that if these mountain lands were cut up, the sides and the lowlands too, it would be a great improvement; and one reason for saying so is this: that what improvement has ever taken place

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Chairman—continued.

place on this land has been by those people who have really stolen it from the Crown, that is to say, encroachers. A shepherd has been planted in charge of a range of hills, and he has invariably put up a house. He has added some two or three fields to that house, and has cultivated it; he has manured it, limed it, and generally improved it. In other places again they are spots where they have built villages; but now-a-days the Crown is very much sharper than in years gone by, and they do not allow this kind of thing. The result is that the land there is in the state it was in the time of Adam.

9491. It was a singular way of making it productive before, but now there is none?—Not any.

9492. Your suggestion, I suppose, is that the local authority might buy these rights, and utilise them for the creation of small holdings?—Yes; but I should make this remark: I do not see any reference in the present Bill to Crown lands; and it might possibly be necessary to introduce that, because the Bill would not otherwise affect the Crown; yet it is very desirable that those, at any rate, with other estates, should be covered by the Bill.

9493. In connection with the details, have you anything to say as to the size of the holdings?—I should certainly, so far as Wales at any rate is concerned, increase it to from one to 60 acres.

9494. But the Bill is not one acre?—From one to 40; I should alter the figure to from one to 60.

9495. I suppose that a 50*l.* rental would cover all that was necessary in that case?—Yes, quite.

9496. If we dealt with rent and not acreage?—Yes; 50*l.* would be most effectual.

9497. Do you approve of the plan for a quit-rent?—No; I should allow the tenant to pay the whole off as speedily as possible.

9498. But if he paid it off on the principle of the Ashbourne Act, the community would have no control over him afterwards, as to sub-letting or anything of that kind?—I think that can be easily provided for by the Bill. I think that these plots should be stamped pretty well as small holdings, and should be subject to certain restrictions which the Bill could provide for.

9499. Would you subject them to the condition that the local authority might resume possession at any time?—I should in certain places; but taking now, for instance, very distant plots of ground in my county and adjoining counties, far from human habitation, or, at any rate, a large number of human habitations, there probably they would never be required, certainly not this century or the next; and I think the disadvantage of binding the holdings with that reservation for those districts might very well be dispensed with. But in a town, or where there was even a remote possibility of the land being required for other purposes, I think it should be so limited.

9500. Then a third object in establishing a quit-rent was to give to the local authorities a stimulus which is involved in an ultimate profit to the rates?—I do not think that the local authority should trade in that way.

9501. Do not you think that the ratepayers, whose money it is that is used for this purpose, might fairly anticipate some ultimate benefit to them, so that not merely the agricultural population would become small holders, but the population which has any desire to become small holders might all feel that they had a joint interest in the undertaking?—I do not think that a local authority ought to expect any profit in the sense of profit. They will gain very great advantages indirectly; the rateable value by the improvements that will follow will greatly be increased, and they will have a better class of men all round them, pauperism will become less.

9502. You think that they ought to be satisfied with the indirect advantages?—Yes, I think so; particularly as the great disadvantage that the holders now suffer from is the high rate of interest; and I think that ought to be diminished as far as possible.

9503. Do you think that it would be necessary to allow the local authority to advance money for improvements in buildings?—No.

9504. You think that that could be dispensed with?—I think so, certainly.

9505. And that the small holders would make these improvements and the necessary buildings for themselves?—In this way: first of all they would provide a fourth of the money for the purchase, that would invariably come from previous accumulations, either as tenant farmers or otherwise. In addition to their fourth they would have their farming stock, and when they go upon this ground they would have no difficulty in getting neighbours to lend them some sum of money necessary to erect buildings. But as I said with us there are buildings already in existence.

9506. I suppose that it would be necessary in any scheme for the creation of small holdings to have some convenient scheme for the registration of title?—Yes.

9507. Have you anything to say with regard to that?—I would not certainly introduce the registration brought into this Bill.

9508. You are speaking of what is known as Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill?—Yes.

9509. What is your objection to that?—In the first place it proposes to constitute a registrar with officials and assistants for each local authority. That means much expense to the local authority which will doubtless in the end fall upon the purchaser. And if on the other hand you join it with another local authority, as is suggested here, then the probability is that you throw the registration work into the hands of solicitors or other third parties. Further, this is a part of a large and complicated scheme, and I should suggest that this should be left to be dealt with by that scheme. It seems to me that if each local authority were by the Act required to keep a register of these holdings, as they do of their present leases, it ought to meet the case.

9510. You would not wish to burden a scheme of this kind with a general system of registration?—No; and particulary as the great desire for registration is to save the legal expenses. In this case the expense would be comparatively small apart from registration; but registration would at the least double or treble it. The Bill takes off from the shoulders of

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Chairman—continued.

the solicitor the responsibility of investigating the title; the Bill could also provide forms of conveyance which could be filled up by the clerk of the local authority, who is invariably a solicitor.

Mr. *Llewellyn.*

9511. You said that these small holdings when they do get into the market are snapped up?—Yes.

9512. Do they fetch high prices?—As I stated before, they fetch from 30 to 35 years' purchase on the rack rent.

9513. Do you imagine that the local authority would have some difficulty in becoming the purchaser; do you think that the local authority could compete with private individuals?—In many instances they would themselves be able to purchase, but in many other instances it would be necessary to have compulsory power.

9514. You approve of the proposals for compulsory powers in this Bill?—I certainly approve of compulsory powers being vested in the local authority when necessary. For instance, in the case of the Woods and Forests which I just mentioned, or where there is a large estate covering a large tract of country, with due regard to residences and parks, and so forth, I should undoubtedly give compulsory power to the local authority to purchase land when necessary.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

9515. You made an objection to the system of registration in the Bill that we have been referring to, and one of your objections was that a solicitor would not be required to investigate the title?—Yes.

9516. Might I remind you that a small holder starts with a good title?—Quite so.

9517. Therefore the investigation you refer to in the case of the small holder selling would be absolutely unnecessary?—That is my point; that, as the Bill gives an absolutely indefeasible title to the purchaser, that gets rid of all responsibility from the shoulders of the solicitor, which is the reason for the high charges at present allowed.

9518. Therefore there can be no expense in the investigation of the title?—That is what I say; that is one reason why it is unnecessary, I think, to introduce this registration of title. All that is necessary would be to fill up a form which the Act might provide, and the fee for that, whether filled up by the clerk of the local authority or by an independent solicitor, could not be much.

9519. Yes; but wherein can the expense be large in the case of a local authority or local authorities jointly, in adding to the expense?—I found my objection on one clause, Clause 12, which says, "Every local authority which shall establish any small holdings under this Act shall open a separate register for the registration of titles to such small holdings. The business of such register shall be conducted by a registrar with any necessary assistance, and any number of local authorities may combine to have a joint office and joint registrar." That necessarily involves a salary, and that in each county will amount to a considerable sum.

9520. But surely you are aware that it might not necessarily involve a salary. If the business

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

is not much, or if it is much, it might be done in the local authorities' present offices?—That may be so, but still there is to be a registrar appointed.

9521. Then that is a question of name or terms. What I want to put to you is this, that if the local authority are empowered, either in their own office, or by naming a certain solicitor, or in various ways, to carry on this registration, it is not necessarily an expensive form?—I think that the whole question between you and myself is a question of degree. I suggest that there should be a register kept in the same way as they keep a register of present leases and transactions: it does not involve much labour or expenditure. But if you go and keep a regular register, and investigate the assignments and mortgages, and transfers of these various transactions, you must get men with technical knowledge, and that will necessarily mean expense.

9522. But may I point out that you are presuming difficulties that cannot arise under the Bill; the Bill, as I take it, does not presume that there shall not be technical knowledge employed, it only leaves to the local authority to secure that there shall be a public registration, so that everybody might know or might understand it. Do you object to the principle?—My only objection is one of money, and if it can be done for nothing on both sides, on the part of the purchaser and on the part of the local authority, I should have no objection certainly. But it cannot. For the purpose of registration declarations or affidavits, copies, or abstracts of the deeds to be registered will be required and all these documents means expense. The Bill of Sale Act which requires registration of such documents doubles the expense.

9523. I take it that after having created small holders you are not in favour of their subletting the land that they have acquired through the public assistance?—My experience is this: that where the small holdings have been created they are not, at any rate in our neighbourhood, swamped by larger holdings.

9524. But, speaking generally, are you or are you not in favour of preventing the possibility of the creation of a new race of landlords, which a power of sub-letting would create?—I certainly would check sub-letting.

9525. Would you prevent it?—I would.

9526. Then would you also prevent free subdivision or free consolidation in the case of small holdings that had been created at the public expense?—I should do this: it is necessary not only to have in existence in a locality small holdings, but also small allotments, and so long as small allotments also are secured, I should have no objection.

9527. That is not my question. I quite agree with what you stated there; but in the case of small holdings created by a public authority with public credit or finance, would you or would you not attach, as an absolute condition, that there should be no subdivision and no consolidation without the consent of that local authority?—I would.

9528. Then if you make a man absolute owner, possessor of the fee-simple without any quit rent, are there any means by which for all time you can prevent these evils?—I think that the Act of Parliament can so provide. I think that

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

that the original conveyance (the root of title) should be ear-marked as the conveyance under the Act, and subject to the provisions of the Act.

9529. After several generations of men in the enjoyment of the fee-simple of the land, do you think that any local authority would take upon themselves to interfere with that man simply because the root of the title, a long way back, ordered him not to do so-and-so?—The land as long as water runs will be stamped as such until there is a change, and when sold it will have an inferior value to unencumbered freehold. Such as leases; a lease once created always continues a lease.

9530. But I am asking you, as a matter of opinion, whether you think that any local authority would exercise the power, which involves fine and punishment, of preventing a man from carrying out any process of sub-letting and sub-dividing?—You are asking me whether I think the local authority will neglect its duty, and I do not think it will.

9531. At any rate, may I take it that it would be much easier for the local authority to carry out those provisions if it was in the receipt of an annual quit-rent?—No, I do not know that it would in the least.

9532. Then, when you say that you wish a man to become absolute owner free from restrictions, you think that he should pay a higher yearly interest, in order to pay off the interest and capital, than he would otherwise pay if he were subject to a quit-rent?—I should give him the option of paying the money in two ways; either by paying the principal by instalments whenever he was inclined, or at once whenever he was able to do so; or I should allow him to capitalise the principal and interest together.

9533. Supposing that a man bought 400 *l.* worth of land, and paid down 100 *l.*, and the remainder was to remain as a perpetual quit-rent, say at four per cent., in order to carry out your idea of making him an absolute owner, you would require him to pay more interest per annum than if he were paying a perpetual quit-rent?—No; the way I would suggest would be this. that the money to be advanced by the local authority should to all intents and purposes be a mortgage which he should be at liberty to pay up all at once, or by instalments of 50 *l.* or 100 *l.*, or any sum he might think proper. I should give him also the option, if he preferred it, of paying the capital sum and interest by yearly payments.

9534. But would you then require the local authority to charge him the lowest possible interest that they could borrow at of the State for this purpose?—Yes; I would just advance a trifle, as little as possible, to cover expenses, and to provide for contingencies.

9535. Then I may take it that you consider that the local authority, that is the ratepayers, who form the great majority, say 95 per cent. of the district, ought to pledge their credit to let a small holder acquire land at the lowest possible price at which their credit can borrow, and take no financial corresponding advantage in return?—Yes; because they get an equivalent in other ways.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

9536. You think that would be sufficient?—I think so.

9537. Do you think that the local authority would be as likely to put into operation a measure of this character, where there is practically no margin?—Pardon me, there is a fourth; and particularly if you were to capitalise principal and interest, it would leave every year a larger margin.

9538. You think that the local authority would be as likely to put a scheme in force where they had the little or no margin you speak of, as they would if they had a larger margin by which the ratepayers would ultimately benefit by becoming the receivers of the quit-rent?—That is to say, whether they would be more likely to put in force the Act when they can put a lot of money into their own pocket, than if they could put nothing into their own pocket; and I should say certainly not.

9539. I should not say putting money into their own pocket. The margin I am putting to you, and what they would put into their own pocket, would be the exact margin which results from their own superior credit. For instance, they can borrow money at 3 per cent., and the small owner can borrow probably at not less than 4 per cent.; therefore the 1 per cent. they would put into their pocket as the outcome of their own superior credit. You object to their having that?—Yes, I do, and I will tell you the reason. The reason is this, that the land does not yield more than from 2½ to 3 per cent., and if you really want to benefit the holder of small holdings, it is by giving him the money as cheap as possible. You lose nothing by borrowing at 3 per cent. and letting to him at 3½ per cent.; whereas if you let to him at 4 per cent. it is only what he can get from others. I consider cheap loans as vital as compulsory power of purchase.

9540. But I am supposing the case of a comparatively poor man, who is a good cultivator, but who has not got the money; you do not hold out that he can go into the open market and borrow money at 4 per cent.?—Yes, most certainly he can.

9541. A man of good character and penniless?—He must have a margin of a third or a fourth.

9542. A man of good character with 100 *l.* in his pocket can go into the open market and borrow the rest at 4 per cent., you say?—My business has consisted of that, and I have put out thousands of pounds, small and large, at 4 per cent. upon such margin.

9543. Then where is the necessity for Government interference at all?—There is this necessity, that it is very necessary where small allotments cannot be had to have compulsory powers to obtain them; but if they are going to charge 4 per cent. upon an advance of money the holder gets nothing; it is only by reducing it to 3 per cent., as I hope, that the Bill will largely benefit this class.

9544. Then you stated that landlords let their land at 2½ per cent.?—Yes, 2½ to 3 per cent.

9545. On what do you base your calculation as to the cost price?—I base it on the purchases which I have seen take place at auctions.

 9546. What

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Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

9546. What do you reckon the land in Wales per acre?—It varies from a few pence to a sovereign.

9547. I mean the value of ordinary land?—Our land varies very much. If you go down to the valley and hill-side the land would vary from 10 *s.* to 1 *l.*; if you go on the bare mountain, it is probably not more than 1 *s.* or 2 *s.* an acre.

9548. I was meaning the selling price?—That would be 30 years' purchase, as I have said, at any rate.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

9549. Do you find that in the frequent sales of estates that take place in Wales, tenants almost invariably bid and bid high for their farms?—They do.

9550. And that in as many cases as possible they secure them?—They do; and frequently when they are not secured by tenants you will find that the tenants were bidders.

9551. And that owing to the fact that the compensation for improvements is small, and that they have little hold upon their land they are put at a disadvantage with their fellow bidders in buying their own farms, that is to say that they have to give certain money, and to buy, in fact, their own improvements?—Very frequently.

9552. With regard to the Crown lands, are they tracts that could be cultivated in Cardiganshire?—There is no doubt that along the hill, side, take the instance I gave of a shepherd building a house and enclosing three or four fields, there is nothing to prevent land on each side of him being so enclosed.

9553. Is much of this land not merely available for cultivating but for planting trees?—Undoubtedly.

9554. Which would become a very valuable accessory industry and employment for small holders?—We consider that larch plantations pay in our neighbourhood well.

9555. And you consider that concurrently with such a provision as this in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill, or something similar, there should be a reform in the tenure of these lands?—I think so.

9556. You think that is necessary for the proper and efficient working of such a Bill or system as this?—Yes.

9557. And your proposal is that they should be vested in the local authority?—Yes, the County Council. I should say the County Council.

9558. Do you consider that any scheme of this sort could bring much advantage unless the local authorities had compulsory powers to acquire land for purposes of this kind?—I think it cannot have much advantage unless it provides for two things; the compulsory acquisition of land by the local authority, and the advance of money by the local authority at something less than the present rate.

Mr. *Angus Sutherland.*

9559. You were asked questions as to the precautions which you thought would be necessary to prevent subdivision in the event of a small holder obtaining the freehold; I did not quite gather what precautions you were to take in the case of a freeholder with the absolute disposition of his land?—I take it that an Act of Parliament can do anything pretty well, and if you declare upon the sale of land that that land is subject to this Act when passed, or to whatever Act may be passed, it will always be stamped as such property. Instead of creating two classes as we have now, leasehold and freehold, you will have freehold, restricted freehold and leasehold. Of course, restricted freehold is not known to the law at present as it stands, but there will be no difficulty in creating it.

9560. So that the freehold which you contemplate under this Act would not be the same sort of freehold as now exists?—No; and I should bring them as near as possible by necessary provisions.

9561. I also understood you to say that you were against the quit-rent; that was, of course, implied in your former answer; and you also stated in connection with that that you did not see that the local authority had any right or title to become traffickers in land, or something to that effect?—Yes, with a view of making a profit. I take it, at any rate, that the policy of the Bill would be to cut up land for the benefit of the neighbourhood generally, so as to make the most of the land.

9562. Do you not think that there is a distinction between a local authority who makes a profit for the sake of the community and a private individual who makes a profit for his own private interest?—No; because, as I put it before, if the local authority is going to charge 4 per cent. interest, plenty of money at that rate can now be had anywhere upon land.

9563. That is arguing from the holder's point of view, and not from a public point of view?—Yes, certainly. I may say further that I have been 17 years in practice, and with the exception of one or two instances, I have never been able to get money under 4 per cent.; but since I have ceased to be in practice lately, and owing to Mr. Goschen's scheme, money is now had at 3½ per cent. frequently.

9564. But the demand for money for this purpose, for the purpose of acquiring land, would naturally be modified by the facilities for getting the land; whatever demand may exist at present for money for the purchase of land, would be modified by the passage of an Act of Parliament like this, for facilities for getting land?—It might if it was very large. I should anyhow let the rate upon which the local authority advanced the money be certainly upon the same terms, as near as possible, as they borrow at, with say 5 *s.* in the 100 *l.* to cover contingencies.

9565. I think you also stated that the local authority would be compensated in some indirect ways?—Yes.

9566. Can you specify some of them?—There is no doubt, I think you will find, if this scheme is adopted that the value of land will be greatly increased by improvements; buildings will be put up by tenants, the land will be manured, and limed and cultivated well; in that way the rateable value will be at once increased. You will have, in addition, an improved character of men in the neighbourhood, and you will find probably that pauperism will decrease.

9567. I presume

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Mr. *Angus Sutherland*—continued.

9567. I presume that in any scheme of this kind the decrease of pauperism would be an object in trying to obtain such legislation?—It ought to be a very great one.

9568. Your experience is that where these small holdings exist, pauperism is less?—I cannot say that I have gone into the question.

9569. You have certified to the character of people where small holdings prevail already?—I have to some extent.

9570. And generally, I presume, that would extend to wherever your experience led you?—Yes; I think there is no doubt that you will find that they are, as a class, better than people who are not freeholders.

9571. I think from the general tenour of your remarks that you contemplate that small holdings would be used in Wales, or in Cardiganshire at least, for the purpose of reclaiming land not now in use?—Yes, I speak generally of Mid-Wales.

Mr. *Thomas Ellis.*

9572. That would happen in all the hilly districts in Wales?—Yes, Cardiganshire, Montgomeryshire, and Merionethshire.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

9573. I should like to be clear about one question. You are aware that the object of this inquiry is the creation of small holdings; in other words, to enable good cultivators who have not money, or but little money, to get a small holding of land?—Yes.

9574. Do I rightly understand you to say that if a man had an opportunity of purchasing 400 *l.* worth of land, and only had 100 *l.*, you would advise your client to hand him the remaining 300 *l.* at 4 per cent.?—Not quite that. The rule of the Court of Chancery is to advance two-thirds of the amount of the purchase money.

9575. Then I misunderstood your answer. The proposal, as contained in the Bill to which you have referred, is that provided that the man has got 100 *l.*, the local authority will advance him the remaining 300 *l.* at 4 per cent. to enable him to purchase 400 *l.* worth of land; and I understood you to say that is what the same man could do in the open market?—The difference between the Bill and the rule now in the Court of Chancery is between a third and a fourth; but in our locality, where the lender very frequently knows as well as the borrower the value of the land, and is satisfied that it has been bought at a fair price, he will not only advance two-thirds, but very frequently three-fourths.

9576. Speaking on the general principle, I want to ascertain whether or no you think that any man can obtain such favourable terms in the open market as are offered under the Bill?—Sometimes, not always.

9577. He could not rely upon it?—No, but he could always rely upon having two-thirds.

9578. Instead of three-fourths?—Yes.

9579. When you say that he could always rely upon it, there again, supposing that the man had no other money but the third, could he always rely upon getting the two-thirds?—Yes.

9580. You would recommend your clients to advance to a man who had nothing but a third,

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

the other two-thirds, at 4 per cent.?—Yes. We never think of the character of the man, as a rule; but all we see to is that at any rate we do not advance more than two-thirds; so long as we have two-thirds the borrower may become bankrupt or go abroad; we look to the land.

9581. May I take it that you admit that there is an advantage in the local authority dealing with the man in this respect: that, while a private lender has always the power of foreclosing at any time, under the proposals dealing with the local authority it is a perpetual quit-rent that can never be raised on the man and can never fall in; do you not consider that a great advantage?—No, I do not; I consider it a great nuisance, if you will allow me to say so. You will not allow a man to redeem it when times are good, and when times are bad he must pay it or suffer a distress.

9582. Do you consider it better for a man always to be liable at any moment to have his mortgage foreclosed, say in a bad season or at any time, or do you consider that it is not an advantage when a man is absolutely certain that he cannot have his mortgage foreclosed?—I consider that there is a greater advantage in the mortgage.

9583. My question is simply this: is the advantage offered by the local authority of never foreclosing the mortgage, an advantage or not?—That is an advantage, with many disadvantages which are greater than the advantage.

9584. And do you consider that the power of a private lender of calling in his money at any time is a disadvantage?—That is a disadvantage with many advantages.

Mr. *Halley Stewart.*

9585. Do I understand you to say that there is a difficulty in tenants paying 4 per cent. interest on the capital value of the land?—I do; they are greatly handicapped in having to do so, and that is the great disadvantage now that they suffer under as compared with their position as tenants.

9586. Is land in Wales at the highest state of cultivation possible generally?—In some parts it is.

9587. Generally?—Generally it is fairly cultivated; it can be improved.

9588. Does it appear to you that if the land is improveable they could afford to pay a little more interest than they would be able to pay if the land were at the highest pitch of cultivation?—I do not see why they should.

9589. That is not the point?—But commercially speaking, why should they give the benefit of their labour and expenditure in future years to the State or to the local authority.

9590. Can they obtain land generally at less than 4 per cent.?—They can obtain land at about 3 per cent.

9591. Is that about the average now?—Yes, and at 2½ per cent.

9592. Do you think it would be considered an equivalent if they could become the tenants of the community with tenant-right without advancing any money towards the occupancy of the land; do you think that they would regard that as an improved position, worth paying a little more percentage for?—It is certainly better than their present position, but it is not to be com-

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Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

pared with their position as freeholders, or such freeholders as are intended to be created by the Bill.

9593. But supposing that it should seem unjust to Parliament to favour a certain class of the community like this, by making them freeholders by the intervention of the State and the municipal authority, would it be attractive to the tenants to have a guaranteed occupancy of the land, what is called a permanent tenant-right, and under such a system would they be willing to pay somewhat more than the current rate?—Half a loaf is better than no loaf at all. I think that would apply there.

9594. What advantage do you consider that there is to the freeholder over a man with tenant-right, guaranteed occupation?—He is always dependent upon his landlord, and there are a hundred-and-one ways by which a landlord can make himself disagreeable and punish the tenant who does not carry out his bidding.

9595. But under the Bill which we are discussing, under any system, I mean, of the creation of small holdings through State intervention, there must be a landlord, or the equivalent of a landlord, the local authority?—Not in the way I suggest.

9596. Yours is the Ashbourne purchase, I suppose?—Yes.

9597. But under the local authority such as constituted by Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill the man would be only practically the tenant of the community?—Yes.

9598. With a fixed rental in perpetuity?—Yes.

9599. Would it not be equally attractive to him to become a tenant without finding any capital towards the purchase of the land, instead of three-fourths, and paying a little higher rent?—No, I think not. I think everyone's desire is to be a freeholder, and I think it would tend to the general improvement of land to put them in that position, securing the other advantages required by the Bill.

9600. You think that the mere idea of being a freeholder would be much more attractive to them. The position I put before you is this: Supposing that in each case the man had guaranteed tenancy, the mere charm of thinking he was a freeholder in one case would be more attractive to him than not having to find any money and being a tenant in the other?—I do not look upon it as being a charm alone. I take it that this scheme will apply to cases where people will save money, and they will require to invest that money, and they prefer to invest it in the land that they hold. The desire of this class is to pay off mortgages or other burdens when times are good, so that they may be the better able to withstand bad times. This they cannot do with an annual rent, whether quit-rent or occupation rent.

9601. But that does not meet my point. Here is a man who has the offer of a tenancy without finding any capital, and he is a poor man?—Pardon me, he is called upon to find a fourth.

9602. Yes, take that man; would it not promote the cultivation of the land to a greater extent if you provide that land without the man finding a fourth, and give him a tenant-right

Mr. *Halley Stewart*—continued.

under the local authority?—No. I will tell you why: the sale of tenant-right is most unsatisfactory, and it involves a lot of haggling and awful litigation when there is an attempt to dispose of it. The tenant sends in his claim for unexhausted improvements; thereupon the landlord turns upon him and sends in a big claim for dilapidations; and the result is that the whole of the man's tenant-right is dwindled away in litigation. I know of many such instances.

9603. And you think it just that the State should provide freeholds for a class of the community at the national expense?—I do when it gets the benefit.

9604. Who get the benefit?—The State.

9605. How does the State get the benefit?—I think the improved rating value will be considerable.

Sir *George Campbell.*

9606. Do I rightly understand that whereas everywhere else farmers have been very much depressed, in Wales they are still making and saving money to buy holdings?—In years gone by they have saved; during the last few years certainly they have not been saving; but now there has been an improved state of things again within the last 12 months. I may tell you that a year ago cattle sold at exactly half their present price.

9607. They have not gone back?—They have to some extent, but not considerably.

9608. They have still got money in their pockets?—The people who made money before the bad times came pretty well retained it. They do not touch the capital, and if they can help it, not the interest either. Under such circumstances money begets money quickly.

9609. Do I rightly understand that the landlord does all the improvements in all cases in Wales?—No, that is not so. As a rule the landlord builds, but not always.

9610. In other cases is there any special bargain made?—In other cases occasionally the landlord gives the timber and the tenant puts up slight buildings or gives an occasional quantity of lime. All other improvements are made by the tenant.

9611. In such cases the tenant has no right of compensation?—He has absolutely none.

9612. Is there no tenant-right in Wales, corresponding to the system in Lincolnshire and Surrey?—No, unfortunately not. I have been concerned in several cases, and I have never been able to apply the Agricultural Holdings Act, not a single instance has come under my notice. I have over and over again endeavoured to establish the custom, but it always broke down; it turns out that the instances quoted have been held under agreement or leases.

9613. Do you think it would be possible to improve the Agricultural Holdings Act, so as to provide for those cases?—I think it certainly would. As it stands now it is a dead letter.

9614. You think it might be improved to that extent?—Yes.

9615. Then I understand that you are in favour of enclosing the great commons in Wales?—What I speak of now is this dual relationship existing between the Crown on one side and the man

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Sir *George Campbell*—continued.

man who holds the land, the grazing of it, on the other.

9616. All that is now in common you would enclose?—Subject to limitations. Where there is a common close to a town, or likely to be required for recreation or such purposes, I would preserve it; but the hills I speak of are something like 20 miles from the nearest town of 7,000 inhabitants.

9617. Supposing that these great commons were enclosed, who would be the parties who would have the right to the land; are there any popular rights, or would the neighbouring landlords take them all to themselves?—We have had the land enclosed in the county; and, of course the Inclosure Act provides that every one's present interest shall be compensated; the landlord gets his share and the freeholders get their share.

9618. Are there commoners in Wales who would get a share? — Yes, when close to villages.

9619. There are common rights in Wales?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings.*

9620. You said that the land was generally sold at 30 years' purchase?—Yes.

9621. Then the local authority, if they bought a farm say of 100 *l.* a year rent, would pay 3,000 *l.* for it?—Yes.

Mr. *Jesse Collings*—continued.

9622. Then by your proposal, they charging the holder 3 per cent., the local authority would only be asking 90 *l.*?—But I do not think you understand me rightly. If you say 30 years' purchase at 100 *l.*, the purchase there would be a trifle over 3 per cent.

9623. It would be nearly 3½ per cent.?—Yes.

9624. If your proposal of letting the land at 3 per cent. is carried out, the local authority would lose 10 *l.* a year?—Pardon me, I do not know that I fixed the exact rate. I said that they should lend money at what they get it with a trifle over, a sum not exceeding 5 *s.* a 100 *l.*; if they borrow at 3 they should lend at 3 per cent., plus 5 *s.*; if they borrow at 2 per cent., they should lend at 2 per cent., plus 5 *s.*

9625. If there is any risk or loss over that, it should fall upon the rates?—They have the fourth, and they have also the improvements that they hold.

9626. But in case of a fall in the value of land or of any other circumstance, in case there should be any other deficiency it must fall upon the rates?—I think you would find that a sum of 5 *s.* per 100 *l.* for very many years would recoup any loss that they might suffer in that respect; 5 *s.* per cent. with compound interest would create a very large fund; 5 *s.* at compound interest in 75 years yields 100 *l.*

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APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

Appendix, No. 1.

PAPER handed in by Mr. *Jesse Collings*, 5th April 1889.

GREAT BRITAIN, JUNE 1885.

— I. —

NUMBER of HORSES, CATTLE, SHEEP, and PIGS in each Class of Holding.

SIZE OF HOLDINGS.	Number.	Per-centage.	Acres.	Number of Horses.	Cows and other Cattle.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
¼ acre and under 1 acre - - -	23,512	4·23	11,195	Not obtained.	Not obtained.	Not obtained.	Not obtained.
Above 1 acre and under 5 acres	135,736	24·42	389,677	28,243	153,829	373,878	165,091
„ 5 „ „ 20 „ -	148,806	26·77	1,656,827	96,736	556,632	1,267,481	322,646
„ 20 „ „ 50 „ -	84,149	15·14	2,824,527	153,242	802,139	2,569,639	314,648
„ 50 „ „ 100 „ -	64,715	11·64	4,746,520	232,817	1,147,681	3,695,476	376,115
„ 100 „ „ 300 „ -	79,573	14·31	13,658,495	581,198	2,671,021	9,498,367	808,230
„ 300 „ „ 500 „ -	13,875	2·50	5,241,168	192,921	799,859	4,590,004	239,408
„ 500 „ „ 1,000 „ -	4,826	·87	3,147,228	99,919	356,396	3,406,562	121,695
„ 1,000 acres - - - -	663	·12	882,615	21,176	71,649	965,329	22,523
TOTALS - - -	555,855	100·	32,558,252	1,406,252	6,559,206	26,366,736	2,370,356

Note.—Horses used solely for agriculture ; unbroken horses and mares kept solely for breeding.

— II. —

HOLDINGS.	Acres.	Number of Horses.	Cows and other Cattle.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
1 to 50 acres - - -	4,871,031	278,221	1,512,600	4,210,998	802,385
50 to 100 „ - - -	4,746,520	232,817	1,147,681	3,695,476	376,115
1 to 100 acres - - -	9,617,551	511,038	2,660,281	7,906,474	1,178,500
300 acres and upwards - -	9,271,011	314,016	1,227,904	8,961,895	383,626
100 to 300 acres - - -	13,658,495	581,198	2,671,021	9,498,367	808,230

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— III. —

	Corn Growing Counties.		Mixed Counties.	
	Lincoln.	Norfolk.	Devon.	Somerset.
Holdings above 1 and not exceeding 5 acres -	7,219	4,334	3,762	4,949
„ „ 5 „ „ 20 „ -	7,954	3,410	3,927	4,095
„ „ 20 „ „ 50 „ -	3,578	2,028	2,696	2,354
„ „ 1 „ „ 50 „ -	18,751	9,772	10,385	11,398
„ „ 50 „ „ 100 „ -	2,205	1,385	2,865	1,760
„ „ 1 „ „ 100 „ -	20,956	11,157	13,250	13,158
„ „ 100 „ „ 300 „ -	2,740	1,360	3,944	2,408
„ „ 300 acres - - - - -	1,297	974	424	454
TOTAL Number in Return - - -	24,993	13,991	17,618	16,020

— IV. —

QUANTITIES and VALUES of some of the Smaller Articles of FOOD, Imported in the Year 1886.

	Quantities.	Values.		Quantities.	Values.
	Cwts.	£.		*Cwts.*	£.
Cheese - - - - -	1,734,890	3,871,359	Fresh Pork - - - -	81,005	200,293
Butter - - - - -	1,543,566	8,141,438	Salted Pork - - - -	290,691	431,245
Margarine - - - -	887,974	2,962,264	Potatoes - - - -	2,707,889	799,265
Lard - - - - -	895,468	1,544,632		*Bushels.*	
			Onions - - - -	3,633,587	506,710
Poultry, Game, and Rabbits -	—	639,704			
			Apples - - - - -	3,261,460	857,095
Bacon - - - - -	3,264,795	6,159,184			
				Thousands.	
Hams - - - - -	946,034	2,243,644	Eggs - - - - -	1,035,171	2,844,063

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Appendix, No. 2.

PAPER handed in by Mr. *A. De Bock Porter.*

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

STATEMENT showing Particulars as to Sundry Sales to Tenants under the Instalment System.

County.	Acreage.	Rent.	Purchase Money.	Deposit.	Annuity for Thirty Years.
	A. R. P.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Under 10 Acres:					
A.—Anglesey - -	4 0 25	4 2 6	150 - -	22 10 -	7 - 4
B.—Devon - - -	6 1 7	12 - -	300 - -	50 - -	13 15 -
C.—Stafford - -	7 2 32 (With house and tithe rent-charge of 1 *l.* 18 *s.* payable thereout.)	8 10 -	270 - -	40 - -	12 13 -
Over 10 Acres and under 20 Acres:					
D.—Pembroke - -	14 2 38 (With house and buildings.)	15 - -	450 - -	67 10 -	21 - 10
E.—Somerset - -	11 0 23 (With house and buildings.)	22 - -	570 - -	85 - -	26 13 6
F.—Flint - - -	13 1 12 (And buildings.)	15 - -	480 - -	80 - -	22 - -
Over 20 Acres and under 50 Acres:					
G.—Cornwall - -	21 0 2	22 10 -	550 - -	100 - -	24 15 -
H.—Devon - - -	35 1 12 (With cottage and buildings.)	50 -	1,500 - -	225 - -	70 2 6
I.—Pembroke - -	30 3 29 (With house and buildings.)	22 - -	550 - -	82 10 -	25 14 4

10, Whitehall Place,
18 May 1889.

A. De Bock Porter.

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Appendix, No. 3.

PAPER handed in by Mr. *A. C. Humphreys-Owen*, 24th May 1889.

BALANCE SHEETS OF TWO SMALL HOLDINGS.

A. B., May 1389.

Capital.

	£.	s.	d.
2 cows, at 14 *l.*	28	–	–
4 ewes, at 35 *s.*	7	–	–
1 sow	2	–	–
Fowls	3	–	–
	£. 40	–	–

Trading Account.

To capital, as above	40	–	–	Sale of 320 lbs. of butter, at 1 *s.*	16	–	–
Rent of holding	9	12	–	„ 2 calves, at 40 *s.*	4	–	–
Tithe and land tax	–	14	3	„ 11 pigs, at 15 *s.*	8	5	–
Poor rates	–	13	–	„ 6 lambs, at 28 *s.*	8	8	–
Feeding stuffs for pigs and fowls	8	–	–	„ poultry, say	12	–	–
				Stock, viz.: £. *s.* *d.*			
				2 cows, at 13 *l.* 26 – –			
				Sow 2 – –			
				Ewes 8 – –			
				Fowls 3 – –			
					39	–	–
Balance	28	13	9				
	£. 87	13	–		£. 87	13	–

He adds to his income by doing garden work for neighbours in the summer and by killing pigs in the winter. He estimates the value of butter, butter-milk, skim-milk, fruit, and vegetables consumed in the house, at 6 *l.* 16 *s.* Until lately he had regular occupation as bailiff on a neighbouring farm.

C. D. (May 1889) considers that his holding will carry the following stock, viz.:—

		£.	*s.*	*d.*		£.	*s.*	*d.*
3 cows	at, say	13	–	–	=	39	–	–
2 yearlings	„	8	–	–	=	16	–	–
1 sow	„	3	–	–	=	3	–	–
Poultry	„	3	–	–	=	3	–	–
					£.	61	–	–

He estimates that the net profit he gets on the above by sales is:—

	£.	*s.*	*d.*	£.	*s.*	*d.*	£.	*s.*	*d.*
Sale of 1 cow every year	13	–	–						
„ 1 yearling	8	–	–						
„ 1 calf	2	–	–						
„ sow and pigs	8	–	–						
„ butter	13	–	–						
„ fat pig	3	–	–						
„ poultry	2	–	–						
	£. 49	–	–				49	–	–
Rent				28	5	–			
Tithe				2	–	–			
Poor rates and land tax				2	10	–			
				32	15	–	32	15	–
							£. 16	5	–

In addition to the above he gets milk and butter for home consumption worth say 10 *l.*, and apples, potatoes, and garden fruit worth say 5 *l.*; in all, 15 *l.*, beside the profit on sales.

He also owns a drill, which he lets out to farmers in the neighbourhood, and does occasional jobs of farm work for neighbours in his spare time. The total result is that on his holding of 14 A. 1 R. 31 P. he makes a profit of over 31 *l.*, and has sufficient spare time to add considerably to his income by working elsewhere.

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Appendix, No. 4.

PAPER handed in by Mr. *Charles Bidwell*, 31st May 1889.

Analysis of Occupations in Parish of *Soham*.

	Number of Occupiers.	Occupied by Owners.	Rateable Value.	Not Occupied by Owners.	Rateable Value.	Total Quantity.	Total Rateable Value.
		A. R. P.	£. s. d.	A. R. P.	£. s. d.	A. R. P.	£. s. d.
Under 1 acre - -	195	17 3 36	822 15 -	20 1 22	1,075 13 -	38 1 18	1,898 8 -
„ 5 acres - -	77	87 0 8	588 15 -	124 0 20	623 10 6	211 0 28	1,212 5 6
„ 10 acres - -	34	82 3 12	460 7 6	164 1 20	508 12 6	247 0 32	969 - -
„ 20 acres - -	43	121 1 11	420 17 6	494 2 6	1,179 15 -	615 3 17	1,600 12 -
„ 50 acres - -	57	490 2 25	685 7 6	1,330 1 6	3,685 12 6	1,820 3 31	4,371 - -
„ 100 acres - -	32	498 0 11	978 2 6	1,675 3 27	2,616 10 -	2,173 3 38	3,594 12 6
„ 200 acres - -	6	124 3 12	194 10 -	809 1 4	1,127 12 6	934 0 16	1,322 2 6
„ 500 acres - -	8	278 0 28	317 2 6	1,997 1 12	2,337 2 6	2,275 2 0	2,654 5 -
Over 500 acres - -	5	1,101 0 19	1,476 15 -	2,781 2 35	2,170 17 6	3,882 3 14	3,647 12 6
Total - - -	457	2,802 0 2	5,944 12 6	9,397 3 32	15,325 6 -	12,199 3 34	21,269 18 -
Railway - - - - - - - -						45 0 0	—
Commons - - - - - - -						238 0 33	274 - -
575 Cottages (for which owners are rated)						43 1 20	1,950 10 -
Total - - -						12,526 2 7	23,494 8 -

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Appendix, No. 5.

PAPER handed in by Major *Craigie* (Q. 4964 and 4994), 29th May 1889.

STATEMENT showing annually the Number of "Separate Assessments" recorded under Schedule B. of the Income Tax (Occupation of Land), and the Number of Separate Returns received from "Occupiers of Land" in the Collection of the Annual Agricultural Returns of Crops and Live Stock.

Year.	Schedule B. Separate Assessments.			Agricultural Returns. Separate Returns.				
	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.	England.	Wales.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
	No.	*No.*	*No.*	*No.*	*No.*	*No.*	*No.*	*No.*
1869 - -	695,978	70,438	766,416	405,264	56,751	462,015	78,811	549,826
1870 - -	700,369	71,655	772,024	393,569	55,978	449,547	79,603	529,150
1871 - -	715,719	71,811	787,530	412,284	57,160	469,444	80,340	549,784
1872 - -	719,325	72,016	791,241	423,830	57,592	481,422	80,565	561.987
1873 - -	728,325	71,644	799,969	422,655	57,517	480,172	80,857	561,029
1874 - -	727,552	71,197	798,749	422,448	57,735	480,178	81,007	561,185
1875 - -	729,770	74,790	804,560	420,692	57,712	478,404	80,859	559,263
1876 - -	730,214	75,190	805,404					557,341
1877 - -	741,536	75,129	816,665					556,962
1878 - -	737,254	75,745	812,999					556,809
1879 - -	737,005	75,679	812,684					554,823
1880 - -	784,713	78,220	862,993	Details not available		- -	- -	554,058
1881 - -	774,074	78,760	852,834					550,457
1882 - -	775,883	79,066	854,949					552,000
1883 - -	801,344	79,391	880,735					554,558
1884 - -	799,305	79,855	879,060					556,415
1885 - -	798,797	79,265	878,062	416,199	60,327	476,526	80,767	557,293
1886 - -	796,776	79,525	876,301	418,320	60,237	478,557	81,017	559,574
1887 - -	794,965	79,917	874,882	420,822	61,006	481,828	81,291	563,119
1888 - -	- -	- -	- -	425,886	62,127	488,013	82,193	570,206

Note.—In addition to the Annual Returns of Acreage and Crops, a special Analysis of Holdings in groups of different sizes was made in the undermentioned years. The totals therein dealt with as forming separate Holdings was as under:

	England.	Wales.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
1870 - - - -	393,569	55,978	449,547	79,603	529,150
1875 - - - -	412,340	57,660	460,000	80,796	550,796
1880 - - - -	414,804	58,834	473,638	80,101	553,739
1885 - - - -	414,950	60,190	475,140	80,715	555,855

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Appendix, No. 6.

PAPER handed in by Major *Craigie* (Q. 4974), 29th May 1889.

STATEMENT abstracted from the Return given in the Annual Agricultural Returns for 1888 [c. 5493], showing the Number of Returns of Holdings occupied by their Owners, and the Acreage of Land so occupied, in the several Counties and Produce Districts of *England*, in *Wales*, *Scotland*, and the *Channel Islands*; with the Total Number of Holdings and Total Acreage returned.

[*Note.*—In this Return the number of Returns are those from occupiers who own all the land they occupy. The acreage includes portions of land owned by occupiers who farm also the land of others. The figures are given as appearing in the Official Returns, but subject to the qualification that they relate only to "Cultivated Area."]

SUMMARY.

DIVISIONS.	Returns from Occupiers Farming their own Land.	Total Returns from Occupiers of Land.	Percentage of Returns from Occupiers who are Owners.	Acreage of Land Owned and Occupied.	Total Acreage.	Percentage of Owner-farmed Land.
	No.	*No.*		*Acres.*	*Acres.*	
I.—EASTERN AND NORTH EASTERN COUNTIES.	15,078	91,040	16·6	1,167,145	6,190,481	18·9
II.—SOUTH EASTERN AND EAST MIDLAND COUNTIES.	15,733	86,166	18·3	1,281,681	5,831,171	22·0
III.—SOUTH WESTERN AND WEST MIDLAND COUNTIES.	16,876	113,614	14·4	850,620	6,391,888	13·3
IV.—NORTHERN AND NORTH WESTERN COUNTIES.	13,748	135,066	10·2	668,229	6,550,993	10·2
ENGLAND - - - - -	60,935	425,886	14·3	3,967,675	24,964,483	15·9
WALES - - - - -	6,454	62,127	10·4	315,844	2,841,402	11·1
SCOTLAND - - - - -	6,044	82,193	7·4	626,557	4,878,514	12·8
GREAT BRITAIN - - -	73,433	570,206	12·9	4,910,076	32,684,399	15·0
ISLE OF MAN - - -	653	2,218	29·4	35,081	98,350	35·7
JERSEY - - - - -	1,068	2,717	39·3	8,832	19,850	40·5
GUERNSEY, &c. - - -	1,034	1,866	55·4	7,447	12,331	60·4

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Particulars of Counties in Divisions.

COUNTIES.	Returns from Occupiers Farming their own Land.	Total Returns from Occupiers of Land.	Percentage of Returns from Occupiers who are Owners.	Acreage of Land Owned and Occupied.	Total Acreage.	Percentage of Owner-farmed Land.
I.—Eastern and North Eastern:	*No.*	*No.*		*Acres.*	*Acres.*	
Cambridge	1,371	8,471	16·2	91,785	488,036	18·1
Suffolk	1,760	9,984	17·6	178,275	778,485	22·9
Essex	1,761	9,407	18·7	182,586	833,803	21·9
Herts	733	4,403	16·6	66,922	341,683	19·6
Beds	528	4,148	12·0	45,871	260,291	17·6
Hunts	679	3,369	20·2	48,030	210,688	22·8
Norfolk	2,302	16,635	13·8	211,184	1,095,195	19·3
Lincoln	5,017	26,430	19·0	262,715	1,514,808	17·3
York, East Riding	927	8,193	11·3	79,777	667,492	12·0
Total	15,078	91,040	16·6	1,167,145	6,190,481	18·9
II.—South Eastern and East Midland:						
Kent	2,282	11,345	20·1	157,379	758,303	20·8
Surrey	1,720	5,770	29·8	104,732	296,930	35·3
Sussex	2,034	9,385	21·7	169,024	681,356	24·8
Hants	2,089	9,386	22·2	213,085	711,612	29·9
Berks	971	4,203	23·1	120,362	376,504	32·0
Notts	1,092	8,661	12·6	79,826	454,924	17·5
Leicester	1,073	8,352	12·8	72,986	473,082	15·4
Rutland	100	1,210	8·3	11,327	87,063	13·0
Northampton	1,112	7,104	15·7	108,411	560,382	19·3
Warwick	1,049	7,810	13·4	87,237	496,892	17·6
Oxford	813	4,732	16·9	78,263	414,404	18·9
Bucks	845	5,378	15·7	57,653	405,472	14·2
Middlesex	553	2,770	20·0	21,396	114,247	18·7
Total	15,733	86,166	18·3	1,281,681	5,831,171	22·0
III.—South Western and West Midland:						
Shropshire	1,236	13,091	9·4	66,871	720,710	9·4
Worcester	1,448	9,130	15·9	70,302	402,807	17·5
Hereford	916	7,251	12·6	57,306	447,286	12·8
Gloucester	2,316	12,083	19·2	126,058	659,192	19·1
Wilts	1,356	7,984	17·0	117,421	759,108	15·5
Monmouth	688	5,697	12·1	26,401	245,014	10·8
Somerset	3,304	18,435	17·9	103,607	867,488	11·9
Dorset	728	5,832	12·5	52,713	492,504	10·7
Devon	2,723	18,992	14·3	165,894	1,202,927	13·8
Cornwall	1,661	15,119	11·6	64,047	594,802	10·8
Total	16,376	113,614	14·4	850,620	6,891,838	13·3
IV.—Northern and North Western:						
Northumberland	618	6,158	10·0	69,944	717,162	9·8
Durham	680	7,100	9·6	42,449	433,770	9·9
York, North Riding	1,159	14,703	7·9	75,407	863,506	8·7
York, West Riding	3,541	31,304	11·3	131,410	1,214,156	10·8
Cumberland	1,259	7,893	16·0	86,202	591,389	14·6
Westmoreland	494	3,851	12·8	25,650	251,756	10·2
Lancashire	1,905	21,849	8·7	70,503	821,599	8·6
Cheshire	1,263	14,410	8·8	43,339	540,449	8·0
Derby	1,200	13,314	9·0	49,518	511,541	9·7
Stafford	1,629	14,484	11·2	73,807	605,665	12·2
Total	13,748	135,066	10·2	668,229	6,550,993	10·2

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Appendix, No. 7.

PAPER handed in by Major *Craigie* (Q. 5079–80), 29th May 1889.

STATEMENT showing Increase or Decrease of Live Stock on Groups of Holdings.

ENGLAND.

HORSES.

On Groups of Holdings.	1875.	1885.	Increase.	Per Cent.
	No.	*No.*		
Under 50 acres - -	194,163	197,406	3,243	1·7
50 to 100 „ - -	160,717	160,755	38	—
100 to 300 „ - -	426,382	446,260	19,878	4·7
Above 300 „ - -	247,771	274,447	26,676	10·8
Total - - -	1,029,033	1,078,868	49,835	4·8

CATTLE.

On Groups of Holdings.	1875.	1885.	Increase.	Per Cent.
	No.	*No.*		
Under 50 acres - -	963,651	1,024,425	60,774	6·4
50 to 100 „ - -	699,548	750,165	50,617	7·2
100 to 300 „ - -	1,695,295	1,908,372	213,077	12·5
Above 300 „ - -	846,902	1,006,583	159,674	18·9
Total - - -	4,205,403	4,689,545	484,142	11·5

SHEEP.

On Groups of Holdings.	1875.	1885.	Decrease.	Per Cent.
	No.	*No.*		
Under 50 acres - -	1,808,413	1,376,749	431,664	23·9
50 to 100 „ - -	2,126,590	1,673,057	453,533	21·3
100 to 300 „ - -	7,592,104	6,469,357	1,122,747	14·8
Above 300 „ - -	7,560,680	7,247,691	312,981	4·1
Total - - -	19,087,787	16,766,854	2,320,933	12·2

CATTLE and SHEEP returned as on Farms, *England* only, 4 June 1885.

Holdings.	Acres.	Cattle.	Sheep.	Cattle. Per 100 Acres.	Sheep. Per 100 Acres.
1 to 50 acres - -	3,558,547	1,024,425	1,376,749	29	39
50 to 100 „ - -	3,285,350	750,165	1,673,057	23	51
1 to 100 „ - -	6,843,897	1,774,590	3,049,806	26	45
100 to 300 „ - -	10,285,988	1,908,372	6,469,357	19	63
300 and upwards - -	7,761,654	1,006,583	7,247,691	13	93
Total - - -	24,891,539	4,689,545	16,766,854	19	67

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Appendix, No. 8.

PAPER handed in by Mr. *Sampson Morgan*, 21st May 1889.

The Channel Islands Export Trade.

	Exports to the English Markets from the Island of Guernsey.					
	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.
Potatoes	24,000	26,800	48,000	54,000	—	—
Brocoli and Radish	39,000	41,048	53,150	—	—	—
Tomatoes	27,633	44,600	52,600	—	—	—
Flowers	5,600	8,660	11,200	16,000	—	—
Grapes	28,300	40,300	51,000	60,000	—	—
Tomatoes French Beans Radish, &c.	- -	- -	- -	69,000	—	—
Brocoli	- -	- -	- -	22,000	—	—
Total Number of Packages	124,553	161,408	215,950	221,000	247,000	284,400

Showing increase from year to year, from 1882 till 1887.

Exports of American Apples to the English Markets, showing Increase of 1886 over 1885.

From.	To Liverpool.	To Glasgow.	To London.	Various.
	Barrels.	*Barrels.*	*Barrels.*	*Barrels.*
New York	249,739	134,290	61,894	19,980
Boston	179,289	14,632	26,561	1,561
Montreal	21,974	27,760	17,384	1,598
Portland	25,628	—	—	—
Halifax, Nova Scotia	- - -	- - -	36,982	—
Annapolis „	- - -	- - -	3,161	—
Total 1885–6	546,630	176,682	145,982	23,129
Total 1884–5	512,213	141,035	117,947	16,590

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PRICES realised for English and Foreign Produce.

Goods.	English.	Foreign.
Mushrooms - - - - - -	per lb. 8 *d.*	per lb. 4 *d.*
French Beans - - - - - -	„ 9 *d.*	„ 4 *d.* to 6 *d.*
Tomatoes - - - - - - -	„ 9 *d.*	„ 6 *d.*
New Potatoes - - - - - -	per cwt. 18 *s.*	per cwt. 12 *s*
Apples, per bushel of 44 to 48 lbs. -	- - 8 *s.*	- - 5 *s.*

PRODUCTIVENESS of SMALL HOLDINGS.

We find, first of all, that the Corn areas of the United Kingdom show an average of 26 bushels to the acre. Sir J. B. Lawes, by an improved system of culture, secures 36; whilst Canon C. W. Stubbs, we believe, has stated that land under the allotment system shows an average of 40. Now, the difference between 26 and 40 is striking, and shows the heavy annual loss through imperfect cultivation. These contrasts are striking enough, yet they are nothing in comparison with the fact that in Guernsey, in a field equal to 2½ English acres, an enormous crop, equal to 54 bushels of Wheat per acre, is obtained.

These results show pretty clearly the advantages to production of Small Holdings of land. The same results not only apply to wheat but to all kinds of produce grown.

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Appendix, No. 9.

PAPER handed in by Sir *Henry Longley*, K.C.B., dated 12th July 1889.

Law Reports (*Chancery Division*), *Vol.* 26, *page* 173.

PARISH of Sutton-to-Church Charity.—Power of Sale.—Vendor and Purchaser Act, 1874 (37 & 38 Vict. c. 78); Charitable Trusts Act, 1853 (16 & 17 Vict. c. 137), ss. 24-26 [Revised Ed. Statutes, Vol. XI, p. 988]; Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855 (18 & 19 Vict. c. 124), s. 38 [Revised Ed. Statutes, Vol. XII., p. 795]; Allotments Extension Act, 1882 (45 & 46 Vict. c. 80), ss. 4, 5, 11, 15; Allotment Act (2 Will. 4, c. 42) [Revised Ed. Statutes, Vol. VII., p. 26].

The Allotments Extension Act, 1882, has not taken away from the Charity Commissioners the power of authorising a sale of charity lands vested in them under the Charitable Trusts Act, 1853, and the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855.

Adjourned Summons.

This was a summons under the Vendor and Purchaser Act, 1874, and the question was, whether the vendors, the rector, churchwardens, and overseers of the parish of Sutton, could make a good title to the piece of land in respect of which they had entered into a contract for sale with Mr. Church, and which had been allotted to them under a local and personal Act (49 Geo. 3, c. 65), being an Act for enclosing lands in the manor and parish of Sutton, in the county of Surrey.

By the 20th Section of that Act it was enacted that the Commissioners appointed by that Act, after making certain allotments, should, out of the residue of Sutton Common, allot such plots as they should think proper, not exceeding 20 acres nor less than 10 acres, for the benefit of the poor of the said parish not receiving alms, in lieu of and in full recompense and satisfaction for any and every right which might be claimed by such poor respectively, of cutting furze or bushes on the said waste lands, downs, and grounds, or any part thereof for fuel, which said last-mentioned plot or plots of the said common called Sutton Common should be, and the same was and were thereby vested in the rector, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor of the said parish, and their successors for the time being for ever, upon trust to be by them respectively, from time to-time, let by public auction for any term or number of years, not exceeding 14 years, at the best rent or rents that could be reasonably had or gotten for the same, with and upon all usual, proper and necessary covenants and conditions, and which said rent or rents were to be by the rector, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor for the time being from time to time applied or laid out in the purchase of fuel for the use of the poor of the said parish not receiving alms, or otherwise for their benefit; and in case of any surplus after such an allowance of fuel should be made as should by the said trustees be considered a reasonable and proper allowance, to be distributed to and amongst the poor of the said parish not receiving alms in such proportion and manner, and at such times as the said rector, churchwardens, and overseers for the time being of the same parish should, in their discretion, think reasonable and proper.

The contract for sale was approved of by the Charity Commissioners, and an order for sale was made by them in the usual way, but an objection was raised on the part of the purchaser that under the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, the Chief Commissioners had now no power to authorise a sale.

Romer, Q.C., and F. T. Proctor, for the vendors, in support of the summons:—

Under Section 24 of the Charitable Trusts Act, 1853, and Section 38 of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855, the trustees had, with the approval of the Charity Commissioners, a power of sale over those lands, and we say that the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, does not directly or by implication repeal those Statutes. We submit that there is no irreconcilable inconsistency between the Charitable Trusts Acts and the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, so as to amount to a repeal of the previous Acts, Hill *v.* Hall (1).

The Allotments Extension Act, 1882, is an extension of an Act 2 Will. 4, c. 42, which we submit it is not necessary to discuss, as these lands are not within it, but if they were, then we say that was not a disabling Act within Section 38 of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855, and if it was, the power of sale is expressly preserved by that section.

Macnaghten,

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Macnaghten, Q.C., and Alfred Smith, for the purchaser:—

If the vendors are right in their construction of the Acts, then the trustees of a charity like this will always be able to render the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, which was passed for the express purpose of benefiting the labouring classes, inoperative. We submit that the whole scope of the Act of 1882 shows that the power of sale is taken away.

Proctor, in reply:—

The several sections of the Acts of Parliament referred to in the argument are fully set out in the judgment.

Chitty, J.:—

The question in this case is whether the trustees of certain land have power to sell it.

The land in question was allotted under a local inclosure Act (49 Geo. 3, c. 65), for the use of the poor. The mode of allotment was as follows (his Lordship read the section of the Act above set out).

Now, the first question is whether the trustees had a power of sale over the land in question when the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, came into operation. Section 24 of the Charitable Trusts Act, 1853, is as follows:—"Upon application to the said Board (meaning the Charity Commissioners) by the trustees or persons acting in the administration of any charity, representing to the said Board that, under the special circumstances of any land belonging to the charity, a sale or exchange of such land can be effected on such terms as to increase the income of the charity, or would otherwise be advantageous to the charity, such Board may, if they think fit, inquire into such circumstances, and if after inquiry they are satisfied that the proposed sale or exchange will be advantageous to the charity, may authorise the sale or exchange, and give such directions in relation thereto, and for securing the due investment of the money arising from any such sale, or by way of equality of exchange for the benefit of the charity, as they may think fit." That section, in fact, vests in the Board a power of sale, for it reposes in them a power of authorising a sale (which they have done in this case), and they are not to give their sanction merely because they are set in motion by the trustees, but they are to be satisfied that the proposed sale will be advantageous to the charity.

Section 26 of the same Act enacts, that "The leases, sales, exchanges, and other transactions authorised by such Board under the powers of this Act shall have the like effect and validity as if they had been authorised or directed by the express terms of the trust affecting the charity."

It appears to me that Section 24 applied to the land in question, and, therefore, that after the Charitable Trusts Act, 1853, came into operation, jurisdiction was given to the Charity Commissioners to authorise a sale, as the vendors contend. Section 38 of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855, gives further effect to that jurisdiction. That section enacts, that "all leases, sales, exchanges, partitions and transactions authorised by the Board under the principal Act or this Act, shall be valid and effectual, notwithstanding the Act of the 13th Elizabeth, c. 10; the Acts of the 14th of the same Queen, caps. 11 and 14; the Acts of the 18th of the same Queen, caps. 6 and 11; the Act of the 39th of the same Queen, c. 5; and the Act of 21st Jac. I., c. 1, or any disabling Act applicable to the charity, the trusts whereof shall be the subject of any such transaction."

I have not been referred in detail to the Acts mentioned in that section, but I understand they are special Acts disabling certain ecclesiastical persons, and certain hospitals and other corporate bodies from alienation and from leasing, except as in the several Acts provided, and do not affect the land in question.

An argument has, however, been addressed to me to the effect that this land is within the provisions of a disabling statute, namely, the Act of 2 Will. 4, c. 42 (mentioned in the preamble to the Allotments Extension Act, 1882), which enacts in Section 1 that it shall and may be lawful for trustees of allotments within the Act, together with the churchwardens and overseers of the poor, and they are thereby required to let portions of any such allotment to such industrious cottagers as the section defines as shall apply for the same in the manner therein mentioned. Assuming that the land in question is within 2 Will. 4, c. 42, is that a disabling Act so as to require the operation of the 38th section of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855, to preserve the power of sale? In my opinion it is not. I can see no irreconcilable inconsistency between an Act giving the Charity Commissioners a power of sale, or a power of authorising a sale, and an Act giving the trustees and others a power in the nature of a trust to let the land to industrious cottagers. I think the power or trust for letting can lie alongside the power of sale.

Even if the Act 2 Will. 4, c. 42, were treated as a disabling statute, I am of opinion that the power of authorising a sale would be preserved by Section 38 of the Charitable Trusts Amendment Act, 1855.

It follows, therefore, that when the Allotment Extension Act, 1882, came into force, there was an existing power of sale over this land, and the next question then is whether that power was taken away by the last-mentioned Act. It is admitted that it was not taken away in express terms, but it is argued that it was taken away by implication.

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What, then, is the rule of construction to be applied? The Statutes must be read together in order to see if they can stand together, and if they can so stand then there is no implied repeal.

Now, the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, begins by reciting the Act 2 Will. 4, c. 42, but the latter part of the preamble and the words of Section 4 are very strong. By Section 4 it is enacted, that "all trustees in whom lands are vested, or by whom the same are held or managed for the benefit of the poor of any parish or place, in or adjoining to that in which such lands are situate, and whereof the rents or produce are distributed in gifts of money, doles, fuel, clothing, bread, or other articles of sustenance or necessity, shall, where such lands are not otherwise used for the benefit of the parish in which it is situate as a recreation ground, or otherwise for the enjoyment or general benefit of the inhabitants, take proceedings, subject as hereinafter mentioned, for letting such lands in allotments to cottagers, labourers, and others." The words of that section are very wide, and in my opinion they cover lands held under Section 20 of the local Act (49 Geo. 3, c. 65), and that will be so even if such land is not within the Act 2 Will. 4, c. 42, for the object of the Act of 1882 is clearly to extend that Act.

Then the 5th Section enacts, that "if any of the said lands should be found to lie at an inconvenient distance from the residences of any cottagers or labourers, it shall be lawful for the trustees to let such lands, or any part thereof, for the best rent that can be procured for the same, and to hire in lieu thereof, for the purposes of this Act, other land more favourably situated for allotments to the poor of the parish or place for whose benefit such lands are held in trust." By Section 11 the trustees are to be at liberty if, in their opinion, the lands shall, either on the ground of distance or on any other ground, be so unsuitable for allotments that no part thereof can be usefully set apart for the purposes of the Act, to apply to the Charity Commissioners for a certificate to that effect, which certificate, however, is capable of being revoked, but to be binding till revoked. Upon the trustees, therefore, obtaining a certificate from the Commissioners the lands can be taken, at all events temporarily, out of the operation of the Act.

The working of the Act is to a great extent committed to the Charity Commissioners, and I think, looking at the whole Act, it would be unreasonable to say that there is any implied intention of depriving them of existing powers.

In my opinion the only section of the Act which raises a real difficulty is the 15th, which is as follows:—"Nothing in this Act contained shall be taken to impair or alter any powers conferred on the trustees of any charities, or the Charity Commissioners, by the Endowed Schools Acts, or the Acts amending the same." It is said that I must hold by inference that powers conferred on the Charity Commissioners by other Acts are taken away. Probably the Endowed Schools Acts contain provisions upon which the Legislature considered that difficulties might arise. These Acts have not been read to me, but I think that must be the case; and I do not feel bound to draw the inference that the Legislature anticipated such a conflict between the Allotments Extension Act, 1882, and these sections of the Charitable Trusts Acts to which I have referred as would repeal the latter.

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

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See also *Allotments, &c. Labour. Migration of Labour. Production. Quit-Rent. Rural Population. Scotland. Supply and Demand. Wales.*

Agricultural Population. See Migration of Labour. Rural Population.

Agricultural Returns. Considerable unwillingness in regard to filling up the Returns in England; belief, however, that this feeling, which was the result of misapprehension, is gradually dying out, *Craigie* 4992——Suggestion that at the next census the return of agricultural holdings should be made contemporaneous with the census itself; grounds for this proposal, *ib.* 5050-5052.

Alexander, William, LL.D. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness is a journalist, living at Aberdeen; is prepared to give evidence as to small holdings in the north-east of Scotland, 9025-9029.

Detailed information as to the holdings in Aberdeenshire, the total number of which in 1868 was 11,462, about 4,000 of them having a rental of between 10 *l.* and 50 *l.*; particulars also as to village allotments, 9030-9057——Complaint by tenants, holding under leases, as to the system of compensation for improvements, 9033-9040.

Approval of the proposition to empower the local authority in certain circumstances to acquire land with a view to a peasant proprietary; conclusion, however, that the creation of a present proprietary is a very doubtful experiment, a man being much better off in Aberdeenshire as tenant than as owner, 9058-9070. 9076-9078. 9131. 9154——Inability of witness to suggest any legislation that would materially increase the number of small holdings, except perhaps that the local authorities might be allowed to acquire land on reasonable terms in suitable localities and let it in lots, 9071-9078. 9088-9095. 9138-9153.

Belief that there would be a demand to rent lands from the local authorities, and some desire to purchase in the immediate neighbourhood of the towns, 9078 *et seq.*——Opinion that in buying land and letting it out to small holders the local authority would incur a certain small risk, and that in the alternative proposition of a peasant proprietary there would be practically no risk, 9080-9095. 9157-9163.

Explanation respecting the large reduction of small proprietors in Aberdeenshire; greater demand at present for small than for large tenancies, 9096. 9108. 9132-9137——Estimate that nowadays the cost of farm-buildings, house, cattle-byres, &c., on a farm of fifty or sixty acres, would be about 250 *l.* to 300 *l.*; considerable difficulty in the extension of small holdings due to the heavy charge for providing buildings, the expense being greater in proportion on a small than on a large farm, 9109-9122. 9155 *et seq.*

Possibility

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Alexander, William, LL.D. (Analysis of his Evidence)—*continued.*

Possibility of arrangements between landlord and tenant, as regards buildings, being facilitated by improvements in the Agricultural Holdings Act, 9123-9126 — Experience of witness that wherever large farms prevail the rents have diminished very much, but that there has been no diminution in the rent of the small farms in Aberdeenshire, 9127-9130.

ALLOTMENTS AND SMALL HOLDINGS:

Conclusion that the allotment question is not before the present Committee for consideration; distinction drawn between allotments and small holdings, *Collings* 5-10—— Considerable benefit already conferred upon the agricultural population by the facilities under the Acts of 1882 and 1887 for the acquisition of allotments, *ib.* 6-8.

Summary of the provisions of the Small Holdings Bill, as re-introduced by witness in the present Session; main object to empower the county authority or district council to purchase land and sub-divide it for sale into holdings up to forty or fifty acres, *Collings* 552, 553.

Encouragement of allotments and small holdings by witness; large number of allotments upon his estates, there being also some holders up to fifty acres who are doing well, *Lord Wantage* 1647-1651. 1654——Stipulation by witness as to allotment holders paying rent in advance; this is not enforced, *ib.* 1656. 1832. 1875-1878.

Gradual way in which many men work up from small allotments to larger holdings; difficulty on the score of buildings where the plots are small, *Ripley* 2434-2442—— View of witness that the Allotments Act is not satisfactory, and that practically a new Act is required for creating small holdings, *Dodd* 5463, 5464——Grounds for advocating a considerable extension of the Allotments Act; argument that if elasticity were given to the allotments system it would enable the small man to put by a little money to increase his holdings, *Fyffe* 6080-6083. 6095, 6096. 6137, 6138. 6152, 6153. 6238-6240. 6310-6320——Expediency of increasing the limit of area under the Allotments Act from one to not less than five acres, *ib.* 6081-6086.

Considerable difficulties as to any extension of the powers under the Allotments Act; reference especially to the difficulty as to buildings if the size of allotments were increased from one to five acres, *Punchard* 7039-7041. 7111-7117. 7180, 7181.

Explanation that witness and Mr. Dodd drafted the Allotments and Small Holdings Bill, which has been split in two, the Small Holdings portion having been re-introduced last year, *Reid* 8553-8556——Object of the Bill to enable local authorities to facilitate the establishment of small holdings of from one to forty or fifty acres; reasons why the interposition of a local authority is considered necessary, *ib.* 8557-8561. 8661-8667.

Grounds for the opinion that a large extension of the Allotments Act to small holdings would not be so satisfactory as Mr. Jesse Collings' proposal, especially in view of the danger of pressure being brought to bear on the local authority by its tenants, as constituents, *Reid* 8576-8588. 8667-8671.

See also *Charity Lands.*

Alness (Ross). Statement that just outside Alness there is some indifferent ground which is readily let as small holdings to people who are generally entirely occupied on it, *Ross* 8301-8306. 8363-8367——Opinion that the provisions of Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill would not be largely taken advantage of around Alness; belief that the present feu system would be preferred, *ib.* 8307-8316.

Obligation upon witness to give the use of a small portion of fallow land for potatoes, as otherwise he would not get labourers; absolute necessity for potato land near Alness, *Ross* 8318-8320. 8445-8455. 8503-8509——Creation of a considerable number of allotments at Alness and at Easter Ross; opinion that the poor people have greatly benefited by these allotments, *ib.* 8323-8325. 8493.

Apples. Statement of the exports of American apples to the English markets, together with the increase in 1886 over 1885, *App.* 506——Much higher price realised for English than for foreign apples, *ib.* 507.

Arnold, Arthur. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness is President of the Free Land League, which has for its object the reform of the land laws; has given a good deal of attention to the subject of small holdings, 190-192. 438, 439.

Statistics in support of opinion that the main hindrance to the creation of small holdings is caused by the accumulation of land in large estates, such accumulation being fostered and protected by the laws of primogeniture and settlement; belief that these influences are still in full operation, 193-204. 303-305. 319-323. 387-397. 404-414. 440-450—— Admission that if there were a larger supply of land in the market and the cost of transfer cheapened there would still be a slight tendency towards the absorption of land by large capitalists, but that, under reformed laws, land would be purchased by those who could make the best economic use of it, 205, 206. 393, 394. 462-464. 481-496.

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Arnold, Arthur. (Analysis of his Evidence)—*continued.*

Possibility of the extension of the franchise, under the protection of the ballot, having had a disintegrating influence, 207, 208 ——Impossibility of having simplicity of title upon the 52,000,000 acres of settled land under the present condition of the law, 209.

Strenuous denial that recent legislation has tended in anything like an adequate manner to facilitate the sale of land, the only facilitating Act being the Glebe Lands Act of 1888; great importance of Clause 8 of this Act, 210-216——Disposition of witness to advocate that glebe land, other than that connected with the incumbents' house and curtilage, should be sold in small parcels by compulsory authority whenever expedient; these lands are the worst cultivated in the kingdom, 216-219. 222-229.

Absence of trustworthy returns as to the extent of the glebe lands, except Parliamentary Return No. 307 of 1887; belief, however, than an average of twenty acres for 10,000 benefices, and a gross annual value of 400,000 *l.*, would not be an excessive estimate, 220-229. 521-525——Opinion that the Glebe Lands Act might be made compulsory and applicable to other public lands, and that private land might be taken by purchase or exchange, 230, 231. 455-458.

Enumeration of the various authorities holding public land, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners coming first with about 500,000 acres, and the Crown next with about 70,000 acres, 232-234——Evidence to the effect that in 1882, when in Parliament, witness moved for a Select Committee to consider the question of Ecclesiastical land, and was supported by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Goschen; considerable success of the Commissioners since then in their endeavours to dispose of their lands, especially their small holdings, 235-237. 240-243.

Condemnation by a Select Committee of 1863 of the holding of land in mortmain by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other corporations; considerable sales in consequence, 237-239. 528—— Approval of the main proposals of the Mortmain Law Amendment Bill introduced by Lord Randolph Churchill in 1884, especially the compulsory sale of public land, preference being given to sales to small holders; objection to perpetuity leases, it being desirable to give the holder the fullest power that the State can grant (in the form of freehold), 244-254. 497-503.

Conclusion that the only way in which it would be just to transfer public land to the local authorities, for the purpose of small cultivation, would be by authorising the local authorities to pay its ascertained value, and so become the absolute owners; admission that any profit or loss on the transaction would go to the rates, 255-273. 398-400 —— Suggestion that, as the land is very unequally distributed in the various counties, wide powers of exchange might be given to the local authorities, 274-278.

Proposal that the local authority, having obtained possession of the land, should be compelled to sell it in small freeholds, and that the unearned increment should be obtained by a payment in the form of a succession duty upon the capital value of the land, 278-280. 401. 504, 505—— Opinion that, in the event of the difficulties of the interposition of a local authority proving insuperable, the alternative is a Land Commission, who would make sales as quickly as possible, giving preference to small holders; recommendation that the Commission should also have authority to advance a certain proportion of the purchase-money, within a limit of 500 *l.*; 281-289. 529-534.

Desirability of the local authority being made the registering authority, provided that strict uniformity in regard to the transfer of land be secured; important bearing of the question of registration of title upon the subject of small holdings, 289-296——Disagreement of witness with the proposal in the Lord Chancellor's Bill that there shall be three kinds of titles; desire that in every case with which the register deals there shall be an indefeasible title, 297-302.

Proposal that the official fees on transfers and the succession duties should be graduated in proportion to the valuation, 306-319. 506-511——Particulars of the German system of transfer of land, which is highly approved by witness; very small amount of the public fees, the transfers being as a rule effected without legal assistance, 324-332. 377. 451, 452. 489-496.

Grounds for witness' aversion to any proposal to limit the right of mortgage, 332-336 ——Possibility of the continental land systems being greatly improved, especially the French, in which the transfer is heavily taxed, and a consolidating power is much needed; information as to the condition of the French peasant, 336-339. 370-386. 517—— Approval of the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act to Great Britain, but decided objection to its being limited to tenants, 340. 402, 403. 529.

Opinion that until recently there was a process going on for aggregating farms and making large tenancies from small ones; belief that a larger produce may be expected, in proportion, from small than from large holdings, 341-352. 357-369. 435-437. 453, 454. 459, 460. 473-477. 535-537. 545-551—— Undoubted effect of inclosures to diminish the number of persons who would probably take advantage of any facilities to become small owners, 353-356.

Statement

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Arnold, Arthur. (Analysis of his Evidence)—*continued.*

Statement that if the produce of peasant farms could be taken by itself in France and Germany it would no doubt show an average production per acre at least equal to that of England; general inaccuracy of the Agricultural Returns as regards the statistics of the produce of foreign countries, 415-420. 461. 478-480. 512, 513. 538-541. 547-551——Great reduction in the number of "statesmen" in Cumberland and Westmoreland, these small freeholders having sold their properties to large landowners in good times, 421-425.

Explanation in support of argument that the State has an absolute property in land, which cannot be parted with, 426-434. 542-544——Increased desire on the part of landlords to grant allotments, but not small holdings, 465-472——Opinion that the present Agricultural Holdings Act is very unfair to the sitting tenant; belief that unless proposed buildings are strictly necessary for the equipment of the farm there is a *primâ facie* ground for obtaining the previous consent of the landlord, 514-516.

Desirability of the State giving authority under which banks in England, as in Scotland, could use funds in connection with the State for first-class land mortgages, 518-520——Extremely wasteful management of the Crown lands; estimate that about 50,000 *l.* a year might be saved by the abolition of the Woods and Forests Department, 526, 527.

Artisans and Village Tradesmen. Two classes of small holders, the one obtaining their living from the land by raising produce for sale, the other using the land as an additional means of subsistence to some other occupation (such as artisans and village tradesmen), *Collings* 10, 11——Several instances cited typical of a numerous class of cases in which traders and others could advantageously combine the cultivation of a small holding with their ordinary business, *ib.* 12, 13.

Advantage in the smaller holdings or allotments being taken by village artisans and tradesmen who have other occupations, *Lord Wantage* 1735. 1905-1908. 1921-1924——Beneficial result if small village tradesmen had facilities for renting or buying small holdings, *Holman* 3101-3103——Small size of allotment contemplated for men who are occupied in different trades, such as shoemakers, *Gibbons* 3720-3723.

See also *Labour.*

Ashbourne Act. Approval of the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act to Great Britain but decided objection to its being limited to tenants, *Arnold* 340, 402, 403. 529——Examination in support of the conclusion that though Lord Ashbourne's Act has worked beneficially under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland it would be unwise to extend it to England, *Squarey* 3821-3862. 3870-3881.

Preference for the system of the Ashbourne Act to any other scheme for increasing small holdings; advantage under the Act in the tenants becoming in the course of time absolute owners, free from any authority, *Punchard* 7022-7037. 7044. 7057. 7061, 7062. 7103, 7104. 7143-7148. 7247. 7257, 7258. 7262—— Opinion that in the event of power being given to acquire land for promoting a system of small holdings the principal adopted in the Ashbourne Act in Ireland might be properly extended to England and Scotland, *Haldane* 8141-8144.

Ashdown Forest. Instance in the case of the Ashdown Forest inclosure of the insufficient protection of small holders by the Inclosure Acts, *Collings* 683-685. 765.——Comment upon the decision of the Inclosure Commissioners that only commoners and certain tenants of the lord of the manor have rights over the forest, *ib.* 684.

Information generally with respect to small holdings in the neighbourhood of Ashdown Forest; conclusion that the small holders as a whole are very much more prosperous than the larger farmers in the same district, *Littleton* 6390-6418. 6456-6459. 6463-6514. 6522-6526——Higher rents paid by the small holders, who are tenants, than by the larger farmers; grounds upon which this conclusion is formed, *ib.* 6394. 6400-6403. 6414-6418. 6500-6504. 6522-6526.

Statement that the size of small holdings varies from half an acre to as much as four acres; occasional employment of the tenants of these holdings by the larger farmers in the immediate neighbourhood, *Littleton* 6396, 6397.—— Considerable increase in the number of small holdings in the neighbourhood of the forest; the majority are ownerships and not tenancies, *ib.* 6404-6406.

Impossibility of getting land for small holdings elsewhere than in the uncultivated part of the forest; inclination of the landlords rather to add to their own property than to sell it to the people, *Littleton* 6407-6411. 6496, 6497—— Statement as to the price of the land taken from the forest and sold as freeholds; calculation that the cost, including the law expenses and the title, is about 36 *l.* an acre, *ib.* 6411, 6412. 6436-6442. 6464——Unwillingness of the Land Commissioners of late years to sell the land from the forest to the labourers, *ib.* 6447-6451.

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AXHOLME, ISLE OF (LINCOLNSHIRE):

Question considered whether in the Isle of Axholme the small holdings are not very imperfectly cultivated and have fallen greatly in value, *Collings* 995-1003. 1068-1074.

Great number of small holdings at and about Epworth, some held by the owners and some by tenants, there being peculiar facilities in the locality (Isle of Axholme) for renting holdings of from two roods upwards, *Standring* 3193-3196. 3213. 3325-3336 ——Particulars of witness' experience as a small holder, and of the experience of many of his neighbours; exceedingly satisfactory results as regards valuation and production, so that he strongly advocates an extension of the system elsewhere, *ib.* 3197 *et seq.*

Varying price paid for the land owned by witness; estimate of the present value, *Standring* 3208. 3302-3310——Written testimony borne by some half score of agricultural labourers at Epworth to the great value of allotments or small holdings, *ib.* 3208—— Employment on adjacent farms of the men who occupy the smaller holdings; statement hereon as to the wages in the locality, *ib.* 3209. 3216-3218. 3268-3271. 3337.

Means of raising money for buying small holdings when for sale, many being mortgaged, *Standring* 3214-3216. 3235-3238——Numerous instances of agricultural labourers at Epworth largely increasing their holdings, *ib.* 3217, 3218. 3261-3267—— Excellent production on the small holdings; particulars thereon, as compared with larger farms, *ib.* 3219, 3220. 3256-3258. 3262-3267. 3311-3323.

Several generations for which the system of small holdings has prevailed in the Isle of Axholme, *Standring* 3244-3249. 3325-3336——Excellent result in the case of a small common at Epworth let out to labourers at one shilling an acre on condition of their providing a cottage, *ib.* 3247.

Information respecting the relative proportion of owners and tenants at Epworth; preference of many for continuing as tenants, *Standring* 3337-3345. 3355-3357. —— Explanation as to the small holders living in cottages in the village, which is close to the holdings, *ib.* 3349-3353——Local custom or tenant-right whereby men on leaving their holdings get compensation for improvements, *ib.* 3357-3361.

Considerable number of cultivating owners in the Isle of Axholme and other parts of Lincolnshire, though their acreage is small as compared with the rest of the county, *Druce* 7620-7627.

Further information respecting the system of small holdings in the Isle of Axholme, the holdings being away from the villages where the cultivators live; varying character of the cultivation, *Druce* 7855-7865. 7869-7871.

B.

Bacon. Increasing use of English in lieu of American bacon, *Pell* 1373. 1496——Quantity and value imported in 1886; *App.* 498.

Banks. Desirability of the State giving authority under which banks in England, as in Scotland, could use funds in connection with the State for first-class land mortgages, *Arnold* 518-520..

Recommended abolition of the monopoly at present enjoyed by a very small number of Scotch banks, which impedes freedom of borrowing, *Sir G. Campbell* 8714.

Beck, Edmond. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Is a land agent, and has been employed in that capacity for the Sandringham Estate of the Prince of Wales since the year 1864; also manages other large estates in different parts of the country, 5328-5330.

Few instances of small holdings in Norfolk, on account of the nature and quality of the land; statement that these are in the neighbourhood of the large towns, and are chiefly occupied by tenants, 5331-5334——Decided view that there should be farms of all sizes; opinion that the quantity of land to be worked advantageously as a small holding would be about twenty-five acres, 5334. 5342-5344. 5358-5362. 5409 5413. 5430-5435.

Strong objection in Norfolk on the part of the larger class of tenant farmers to small holdings, 5343-5348. 54205422—— Doubtful advantage of giving tenants special facilities to become small owners; conclusion that small owners are worse than small tenants, 5355. 5381-5392. 5396-5400. 5418, 5419. 5436-5440——Calculation that in order to farm profitably a small holding a man would require a capital of 10*l.* an acre, 5363-5366. 5414-5417——Conclusion that small holdings are generally more profitable than large farms; statement that in Lincolnshire the land is taken up directly by the small men, 5367-5375.

Necessity for small holders to co-operate among themselves for the hiring of horses 5301——Necessity of small holdings being close to villages or market towns, 5422-5429. 5453-5455——Opinion that land for small holdings should be of the value of 30*s.* an acre, 5446——Increased supply of the smaller articles of food if there were an increased number of cultivating owners, 54485452.

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

Bective Estate (*Westmoreland*). Large expenditure by Lord Bective on additional improvements on his estate during the last twenty years; calculation that 1 per cent. represents the interest on the original outlay received in the present rental, *Punchard* 6967–6977. 6981–6984. 7162–7165. 7201–7204——Reduction of rent on the estate to the extent of from 10 to 15 per cent. during the last fifteen years, *ib.* 6972, 6973.

Belgium. Distinct increase in Belgium in the number of agricultural holdings and small farms, *Craigie* 5071. 5073——Material decrease in the number of sheep in Belgium within the last ten years; corresponding increase in the food imports in the same interval, *ib.* 5071, 5072.

Statement that farming by owners is not so prominent in Belgium as in France, the explanation being that the tenants in Belgium are exceedingly well protected in regard to improvements, *Craigie* 5073–5076——Undoubted increase in the number of small agricultural holdings in Belgium; absence of increase in the number of the larger farms, *ib.* 5073——Considerable excess of the importations of food over the exports, *ib.* 5081.

Bidwell, Charles. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Is a land agent and surveyor practising at Ely and Cambridge; is agent for some of the colleges at Cambridge, for the Dean and Chapter of Ely, Lord Cadogan, and the Duke of Portland, 5090–5094.

Tendency at the present time to reduce the size of agricultural holdings in the Eastern counties; absence of desire on the part of tenant farmers to invest their capital in large holdings, 5095, 5096. 5139–5144. 5151, 5151* ——Considerable difficulty which arises in the case of small holdings in respect of the want of buildings; great importance of the tenant being allowed to erect his own buildings, with a certainty of obtaining compensation for improvements when he leaves, 5096–5103. 5169. 5205–5207. 5231–5243. 5257–5261. 5305–5316.

Power given to landlords to borrow money for buildings under Acts of Parliament from the land improvement companies; costly character of the buildings which must be erected when money is obtained from these companies, 5099–5103. 5232–5238——Favourable opinion as to the character of the smaller tenants in respect of industry and thrift; assertion that the smaller farms are worked better, in proportion to the larger holdings, 5104–5106——Statement that in the smaller farms, there being more labour put into the land, there is consequently no waste, and every foot of ground is made the most of, 5105, 5106.

Particulars regarding the parish of Soham and the general character and extent of the holdings; large amount of uninclosed common land where the occupiers have the privilege of turning their horses and cattle out to graze, 5107–5123. 5208, 5209. 5248–5251——Belief that in Soham the small tenants do better than the actual owners of the small holdings, 5115–5123——Experience of witness that the sense of ownership is not a stimulus to industry, and that as a rule the little men prefer hiring to buying, 5122, 5123.

Information respecting the character and extent of the holdings in the parish of Chatteris, in the Isle of Ely; in this parish there are from seventy-five to eighty occupiers farming from fifteen to fifty acres, 5124–5138. 5210–5220. 5283——Considerable demand for the smaller holdings in the parish of Chatteris; explanation that when small freeholds come into the market they are rarely bought by men who cultivate them themselves, 5137, 5138. 5299, 5300——Advantage of giving tenants facilities to purchase small holdings by allowing them time to pay the incoming valuation or by otherwise assisting them with capital, 5145–5150. 5152–5160.

Argument that the amount of land suitable for small holdings depends in a large measure upon the character of the soil; expediency of fixing a limit of money rent, rather than one of pure acreage, 5161–5168——Typical case of a farm of nineteen acres in Chatteris which was worked entirely by a man and his own family; one horse only kept on this farm, 5168. 5221–5230. 5294–5298. 5324–5327.

Unfavourable opinion generally as to giving occupiers facilities to become owners; numerous difficulties in the way of tenants becoming owners, 5170–5195. 5252–5256. 5262–5272. 5287–5290——Important fact that the best land is taken; inferior land never found where there are small holdings, 5187–5190. 5273, 5274.

Similarity of the agriculture in some parts of France to that carried on in Cambridgeshire, where carrots and roots generally are cultivated, 5302, 5303——Explanation that in France when a man dies his property is cut up into very small pieces and divided amongst his family, 5303.

Entire approval of a system of transfer of land similar to that which exists in some of the Colonies and in America; strong feeling that there should be in this country a simplification of transfer, 5319–5321.

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

Birkett, Percival. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness is solicitor to the Commons Preservation Society and to some other kindred associations; he has made a special study of the origin of the rights and position of small owners in connection with commons, 8842–8844.

Result of witness' experience that in all cases where a question arises on some encroachment or inclosure of a common, it is invariably the small holder who is the first to complain, 8845, 8846——Information as to the true and the prescriptive rights of common; definition of the several descriptions of commonable land, 8847–8856. 8860.

Grounds for the opinion that the rights of the commoners are paramount, and are much more important than the rights of the owner or lord of the manor, 8857–8861——Prejudicial effect of inclosure as regards the interests of small holders, whose number it reduces; impossibility of many of the smallest holders succeeding at a distance from the commons, 8862–8879. 8883, 8884. 8892–8894. 8963. 8991 *et seq.*

Statement that the small commoners cannot resist the inclosures, as they have not the means to meet the expenses; invariable success of the commoners whenever cases have been properly fought out, 8880–8882. 8959–8962. 8988–8990——View of witness generally that all inclosures of commons should be prohibited; opinion that if additional small holdings are to be created, they should be carved out of other land than commons, 8885–8895. 8997–9002. 9011.

Desirability of there being a large tract, to be held as common pasturage, in connection with small holdings, 8896, 8897. 8975 *et seq.*——Non-existence of any special facilities for the creation of small holdings; disapproval of the local authority being introduced to create them and becoming a large owner of them, 8898–8924. 8953, 8954. 8968. 8971. 8975–8987. 9012–9017.

Tendency of the Settled Land Act to distribute the land by ordinary sale, 8925, 8926. 8931, 8932——Belief that the Ordnance Survey map would remove some of the difficulties, as regards identification, that stand in the way of registration of land, 8927–8930.

Aggregation of land in the hands of a few immediately after the abolition of feudal tenures by the Statute of 1660; tendency of the Statute of Merton and the Statute De Donis of Edward I. towards the aggregation of land, the former Statute encouraging illegal inclosures, 8933–8941. 8955–8967. 9003–9007. 9018–9024——Doubt as to the power of mortgaging for specific debts being a great impediment to the distribution of land, 8942–8947.

Flourishing condition of the small holders in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, 8948–8952——Great demand, in counties where commons exist, for allotments, the demand for ownerships being considerably less, 8972–8974.

Decided opinion that if the commoners had made use of the privileges granted by the Commons Act of 1876, they would have been better able to defend their rights, 9008–9010——Great desire on the part of people to take the existing fuel allotments of charity land under the old Inclosure Acts, and cultivate them, 9017.

Black Isle (*Ross-shire*). Information as to the nature of the tenure, &c., in the Black Isle, *Ross* 8484–8486.

Brixworth (*Northampton*). Instance in the Brixworth union of the provision of allotment land for labourers without the Allotments Act being needed, *Pell* 1318. 1399–1407.

Buckinghamshire. Evidence as to the satisfactory position held by the small holders of land at Claydon; strong opinion in favour of the creation of small holdings generally, *Robertson* 6530–6579. 6603–6606. 6626–6682. 6683–6691——General desire at Claydon for tenancies rather than ownerships; preference for tenancies accounted for by the difficulty of obtaining capital for stocking and cropping the farm in addition to purchasing it, *ib.* 6540–6544——Moderate rents paid in Buckinghamshire for small holdings, *ib.* 6585–6590. 6678–6682.

BUILDINGS:

1. *Generally as to the Character and Cost of the Buildings required on Small Holdings, as to the Difficulties on this Score, and the Facilities proposed.*
2. *Operation of the existing Laws in England and Scotland as regards Farm Buildings; varying Practice of Landlords in the matter.*

1. *Generally as to the Character and Cost of the Buildings required on Small Holdings, as to the Difficulties on this Score, and the Facilities proposed:*

Examination as to the several buildings required for holdings of ten acres upwards, such as cowhouse, stable, cart-shed, and pig-stye, besides the cottage, and as to the cost thereof; provision in witness' Bill for obtaining loans for this purpose, *Collings* 782. 931–960

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

BUILDINGS—continued.

1. *Generally as to the Character and Cost of the Buildings, &c.*—continued.

931-960——Opinion that the cottage and buildings for a holding of ten acres might be provided for about 150 *l.*, *Collings* 947-956.

Statement to the effect that on a holding of fifty acres all the required buildings could be provided through the freeholder for about 100 *l.*, *Lord Wantage* 1797-1807. 1962-1964.

Evidence in approval generally of facilities for the purchase of small areas and the provision of the necessary buildings by means of Government advances to be repaid over a lengthened period, *Ripley* 2397, 2398. 2408-2412. 2416——Suggestions more especially as to the provision of buildings; advantage on the score of repairs where the occupiers are owners, *ib.* 2424-2430. 2440-2442. 2456-2462. 2558-2561.

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[Fourth Examination.]—Reiteration of statement that the class of small cultivators have been squeezed out of existence by the inclosures which have been made, mainly in the latter part of the last century and the first part of the present century; inclosure of some 7,000,000 acres of land under private Acts previously to 1845; 1512–1515.

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1617–1621——Former tendency, moreover, to the consolidation of farms, the small freeholds having been extinguished, 1514–1516——Great barrier to the creation of a peasant proprietary through the operation of the laws of entail and settlement, which should be abolished, 1517–1523.

Improved condition of the small holders on the Dodford estate since they have cultivated strawberries, 1524–1529——Opinion that generally fruit-growing is one of the most important means for the profitable use of small holdings, 1529.

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Compensation for Improvements. Great value attached to the Cottage Gardens and Allotments Compensation Act of 1887, *Collings* 812–814——Doubt as to the necessity of any further legislation in respect of compensation to tenants on the matter of fruit trees, buildings, &c., which they have provided, *Lord Wantage* 1909–1919.

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Opinion that the landlord should be compelled to lease to the local authority, the latter leasing to the tenants, *Holman* 2826-2831. 3185-3190——Satisfaction expressed with Mr. Collings' Bill if it be made compulsory; examination hereon to the effect that some limit of area should be drawn in applying compulsion, and that witness is not prepared to submit detailed suggestions on the subject, *Standring* 3221-3224. 3276-3301——Conclusion adverse generally to compulsory powers in the matter of small holdings, *Wimpenny* 3401-3409.

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Approval of the proposal to give to local authorities compulsory power to purchase land; suggestion that for this purpose the money should be provided partly out of succession duties and partly out of the rates, *Dodd* 5497-5534. 5625-5642. 5708-5715——Concurrence in the proposal of giving to local authorities compulsory powers to purchase; belief that many landlords would welcome compulsory powers for the reason that they desire to increase small holdings, *Fyffe* 6154-6158. 6201. 6233-6235. 6300-6302.

Approval of the Small Holdings Bill as giving the best facilities for the creation of small holdings; belief, however, that the compulsory clauses would not be generally approved, *J. A. Smith* 7354-7369——Opinion that the compulsory power to obtain land is a very valuable portion of the Bill, *Reid* 8661-8664——Belief that the Bill will not be of much advantage unless it enables the local authority to compulsorily acquire land and to advance money at less than the present rate, *G. Jones* 9558.

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Consolidation of Holdings. Statement as regards the number of small holdings that one great cause of diminution is the practice of consolidation of small farms into large ones, which went on for a considerable period; contrary tendency at the present time, *Collings* 16-21. 33-53. 56——Reference to extracts from the Report of the Royal Commission of 1867 upon employment in agriculture; evidence therein as to the consolidation of farms, whilst there is a conflict of opinion as to the advantage thereof, *ib.* 27-45——Effect of the former consolidation of holdings, jointly with inclosures, in driving the people off the land and in extinguishing the small freeholders, *ib.* 775. 781. 1514-1516.

Considerable depression in the farming interest in witness' locality; great mistake in the consolidation of farms, *Holman* 3007, 3008. 3104-3108——Belief that the process of consolidation has been considerably checked by the difficulty which exists in regard to the letting of large farms, *Fyffe* 5979, 5980.

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land when held by large owners, this not applying in the case of small owners, *Punchard* 6938-6940. 6986. 6995, 6996. 7196-7200——Benefit not only to the occupiers of the district, but to the local trade generally, *ib.* 6985-6994——Admission that rural trade is affected so far as there is reduction in the population through amalgamation of farming, *ib.* 6988-6996. 7135-7142.

Aggregation of land in the hands of a few immediately after the abolition of feudal tenures by the Statute of 1660; tendency of the Statute of Merton and the Statute De Donis of Edward I. towards the aggregation of land, the former Statute encouraging illegal inclosures, *Birkett* 8933-8941. 8955-8967. 9003-9007. 9018-9024.

Continued progress of consolidation of small farms in East Ross, except during recent years; buildings are usually levelled when farms are consolidated, *Ross* 8271-8279 8496-8500——Statement that there were many small proprietors in Aberdeenshire formerly, but that they were wiped out when the process of agricultural improvement began, *Alexander* 9096-9104——Great diminution in the number of small holders all over Scotland, in consequence of the small holdings having been thrown into large holdings in order to protect the game, and also on account of the expensive repairs to buildings that are often necessary on the expiry of the lease of a small holding, *Duncan* 9225-9243. 9352-9364. 9426-9431.

Cornwall. Exceptional circumstances in the case of Cornwall which account for the unusually large number of small holdings in that county, *Collings* 916-918.

Cow-gates. Statement on the subject of cow-gates, and the extent to which provided in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, when inclosures have been carried out, *Collings* 875-881——Efforts made by Lord Bective, in Westmoreland, to let pasture as cow-gates; failure of this system owing to the difficulties through the want of separate buildings for the cattle, *Punchard* 7178, 7179. 7205-7209.

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Information in regard to the special inquiries made by witness as to the size of agricultural holdings, both in this and other countries, 4950-4956——Opinion that in the reference to the Committee are involved two questions, one of policy and one of fact; view that the policy of the present inquiry rests upon the economic question, and also upon the social question, 4957-4961.

Statement that as regards the numbers of owners there are no reliable data; general impression, however, that there has been a diminution over a considerable period, 4957. 4961. 4965-4969——Suggestion that there should be a combination of our fiscal returns with the Ordnance Survey, with the object of having an accurate return of the numbers of owners of land in this country; approval also of the proposal that there should be an extended system of compulsory registration of land, 4967.

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Information generally respecting the agricultural population in England; diminution in the last thirty years in the fifteen agricultural counties of 1 per cent. of the rural population, 5041-5056——Anticipation that a considerable decrease in the rural population

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lation will have taken place within the last eight years since the Census of 1881; 5047 ——Suggestion that at the next census the return of agricultural holdings should be made contemporaneous with the census itself; grounds for this proposal, 5050-5052 ——Larger decrease in the population of those counties which have the greater proportion of small farms, 5053, 5054.

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Distinct increase in Belgium in the number of agricultural holdings or small farms, 5071-5073——Material decrease in the number of sheep in Belgium within the last ten years; corresponding increase in the food imports in the same interval, 5071, 5072.

Statement that farming by owners is not so prominent in Belgium as in France; the explanation of this fact is, that the tenants in Belgium are exceedingly well protected in regard to improvements, 5073-5076 —— Undoubted increase in the number of small agricultural holdings in Belgium; absence of increase in the number of the larger farms, 5073——Statement that efforts are being made in France to introduce something akin to our Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883; 5076.

Information as to the amount of production on small holdings in England as compared with larger ones; increasing amount of stock on the large farms, whilst, on the other hand, stocks are decreasing on small farms, 5078-5080——Increase of cattle over the whole of England, but most steadily is the increase on the larger holdings, 5080—— Conclusion from the published statistics of the production on agricultural holdings in England that the smaller and poorer farmers have not stood the time of depression as well as the larger farmers, 5080.

Detailed statement in regard to the production on agricultural holdings in France; conclusion that the soil and the nature of the climate has much more effect on grain crops than any system of agriculture, 5081-5083——Statement that the greater produce and better farming are seen on the larger individual farms, 5081——Potatoes grown in the whole of France to the amount of three tons per acre, as compared with six and one-third tons in the whole of England, 5081.

Large number of cattle used in France for working the farms as well as for food, 5081—— Larger production of butter per animal in England than in France, notwithstanding the large imports of butter from France into England, 5081——Statement that France is not a self-maintaining country, and that her food imports largely exceed her food exports; statistics in support of this statement, 5081 ——Considerable excess in Belgium also of the importations of food over the exports, 5081.

Information as to the import of butter into England from foreign countries; statement that the importation of French butter depends more on its uniform character than on the extent of its production, 5082, 5083 ——Butter imported from France and Denmark is principally made in large co-operative factories rather than by individual proprietors, 5082—— Inferior character of the butter made in Ireland, which accounts for the serious falling off in its importation into England, 5084, 5085.

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Crofters (Scotland). Considerable number of lowland crofters in the east of Ross and the lowland parts of Inverness; success, as a rule, of these small holders, *Ross* 8468-8475——Doubt as to the willingness and ability of the crofters in Perthshire to pay 4 per cent. on the balance, after providing one-fourth of the purchase money down; expectation that only 3½ per cent. would be asked, *Duncan* 9206-9216. 9244-9252. 9313 *et seq.*

Large number of crofts in the neighbourhood of villages in Forfarshire and Perthshire; extensive cultivation of strawberries on them, *Duncan* 9365-9375. 9381-9383 —— General feeling of the crofters in favour of owning a thirty-acre farm to renting a 150-acre one, *ib.* 9376-9379. 9435-9441.

Crown Lands. Extremely wasteful management of the Crown lands; estimate that about 50,000*l.* a year might be saved by the abolition of the Woods and Forests Department, *Arnold* 526, 527.

Suggestion that in certain cases the local authorities should have compulsory powers

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to purchase Crown lands, as when unlet, with a view to letting them in small holdings, *Collings* 715, 716.

Conclusion that in some instances Crown lands might properly be let in small holdings; importance of the Crown officials having close relations with the district councils in regard to the letting of the lands under their control, *Dodd* 5551-5555——View that by giving the local authority power with regard to Crown lands there is benefit to the Crown as well as the local authority and the public, *ib.* 5552.

Agreement with the principle of the Small Holdings Bill, but not with the details; suggestion that the Crown lands and Crown rights should be covered by the Bill, as in Wales, *Jones* 9487-9514. 9552-9557. 9615-9619.

Culley, George. Comment upon the views expressed by Mr. Culley, one of the Assistant Commissioners, in 1867, as to the relative advantages of large and small farms with regard to employment and the rate of wages, *Collings* 41-45.

Cultivation (Small Holdings). Continual care and labour devoted to the land when the small cultivator has security of tenure, the result being additional production, *Collings* 657-669. 672, 673——Contention that generally small holdings are better cultivated than large farms, and receive in proportion more manual and horse labour, *ib.* 993-1004——Restrictions to be imposed by the local authority in the matter of cultivation, *ib.* 1149-1156.

Apprehension lest continuous ownership by the local authority would tend to stereotype the use to be made of the land, *Pell* 1285-1287——Conclusion that one man and his family could work a farm of sixty acres of grass land, *ib.* 1379-1384. 1458-1470——Necessity of good land for profitable cultivation by small holders, *ib.* 1502, 1503——Frequent success of Scotchmen as small cultivators where Englishmen would fail, *Lord Wantage* 1925.

Advantage in a man holding ten acres (more or less) and devoting all his time to it, instead of working as a labourer and cultivating an acre or so in his spare time; approval also of the latter course according to the locality, *Ripley* 2498-2504. 2530-2545. 2587. 2606, 2610——Necessity for small holders to co-operate among themselves for the purpose of hiring horses for the purposes of cultivation, *Beck* 5401——Belief that, as a general rule, small holdings are better cultivated than large ones, *Robertson* 6566, 6567.

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Eastern Counties. Tendency at the present time to reduce the size of agricultural holdings in the Eastern counties; absence of desire on the part of tenant farmer to invest their capital in large holdings, *Bidwell* 5095, 5096. 5139–5144. 5151, 5151*.

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varieties of fruit trees, *Morgan* 5781-5787. 5800-5813——Very large importation of foreign fruit at the present time, *ib.* 5797-5799.

Complete suitability of the English climate and soil for the successful culture of fruit; willingness of witness to produce choice fruit grown in the open air in Kent in proof of this assertion, *Morgan* 5800-5813——Expediency of growing soft fruits only in small quantities to satisfy local and other special needs, *ib.* 5835, 5836——Desirability of the Government spreading knowledge in regard to fruit-growing by means of leaflets and other publications; contention that the new Agricultural Department should include horticultural matters, *ib.* 5838-5843. 5878-5880. 5934-5936——Large quantities of land in England entirely wasted through being planted with worthless varieties of fruit trees, *ib.* 5839, 5840.

Favourable opinion of witness respecting the Small Holdings Bill; belief that it will lead to greater facilities for the cultivation not only of fruit, but also of vegetables throughout the country, *Morgan* 5846-5854. 5957-5961——Indifference as to the terms upon which the land for fruit-growing is obtained, so long as the rent is fair and the tenure is secure, *ib.* 5866-5874. 5899——Great importance of establishing a satisfactory system of compensation for improvements, in regard to fruit-growing, *ib.* 5911-5916.

General statement that for every 100 *l.* worth of produce sold in the markets only 25 *l.* find their way into the grower's pocket, *Morgan* 5931——Decided opinion that there is a demand for land for fruit-growing in excess of the supply, *ib.* 5962, 5963——Statistics handed in (*Appendix* 506, 507) regarding the import of fruit from the Channel Islands, and from Canada and the United States, *ib.* 5967, 5968.

Suitable character of small holdings for the growth of fruit and vegetables, *Druce* 7486——Increased growth of fruit chiefly on large holdings, *ib.* 7486-7489. 7528, 7529. 7608-7610. 8020.

Fuel Allotments (*Charity Lands*). See *Charity Lands.*

Fyffe, Charles Alan. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Is the Estates Bursar of University College, Oxford; has had much experience in the management of land, being a landowner in the Weald of Sussex, 5969-5973.

Considerable diminution in recent times in the number of small landholders; the main cause of this decrease is the process of consolidation of farms which has been in operation for many years, 5974-5981——Belief that the process of consolidation has been considerably checked by the difficulty which exists in regard to the letting of large farms, 5979, 5980.

Information generally in regard to small holdings in several of the agricultural counties of England; in Huntingdonshire there is some increase in the number of the smaller kind of farms, 5981-6006.

Tendency, for political reasons, during the past 100 years to keep large masses of land in unbroken quantities; opinion that this object has pervaded the Statute Book of this country for more than a century, 6008-6025. 6034-6039——Letter of Lord Palmerston in 1856, recognising the political necessity of keeping together large masses of unbroken land, 6009-6012. 6023——Arbitrary character of many of the enclosures made by landowners; contention by the landlords that they are entitled to enclose to within fifteen feet of the centre of the highway, 6026-6033——Proposal that the illegal inclosure of a common or other waste land should be punished by imprisonment without the option of a fine; expediency of imposing on a smaller local body than the County Council the duty of watching over these rights, 6032, 6033. 6211-6217. 6257-6263.

Suggestions in regard to the reforms necessary in the present system affecting land tenure; opinion that special legislation is required in order to give additional facilities for the creation of small holdings, 6040-6046. 6050-6060. 6077-6095——Strong view that land should not be made the subject of settlement or life estate, 6043-6056. 6249-6252——Contention that until settlement is extinguished there will be very great difficulties in the way of cheapening land transfer, 6045, 6046——Belief that the entire abolition of settlements would naturally bring a vast amount of land into the market, 6054.

Great importance that the land offered for small holdings should be of very good quality, 6061-6068——View that the circumstances of social life in England are remarkably favourable to the existence of small holdings; assertion that if the land be not suitable for one commodity it will be for another, for which there will be a certain market, 6063.

Examination as to the general advantages of small holdings for the working people of this country; argument that the creation of small holdings is a matter of national importance, 6069-6073. 6202-6206. 6243-6248. 6256. 6264-6275. 6303-6309——Considerable difficulty in regard to the purchase-money; disapproval of the purchaser

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Fyffe, Charles Allan. (Analysis of his Evidence)—*continued.*

finding a portion of the money and having to borrow the remainder, thus incurring a debt which will weigh heavily upon him from the first, 6074, 6075. 6078–6080.

Statement that the demand to rent small holdings of a suitable character is exceedingly great at the present time; belief, also, that if facilities were afforded the demand to purchase them would also be very great, 6076——Instance in which witness advertised a small farm of his own of thirty-three acres, and within three days he had applications from twenty-three persons, 6076. 6271–6275.

Grounds for advocating a considerable extension of the Allotments Act; argument that if elasticity were given to the allotments system it would enable the small man to put by a little money to increase his holding, 6080–6083. 6095, 6096. 6137, 6138. 6152, 6153. 6198. 6238–6240. 6310–6320——Expediency of increasing the limit of area under the Allotments Act from one to not less than five acres, 6081–6086.

Proposal that there should be a double form of public action to facilitate the founding of small holdings; suggestion that besides the central authority the local authority should be charged with the duty of purchasing land about small towns and villages to be afterwards let in small quantities, 6087–6095. 6097–6099. 6149–6152. 6165–6171. 6199, 6200. 6276–6291. 6297–6299.

Decided opinion that the local authority should have, in the case of letting land on lease, some more tangible security than the mere possession of the land; suggestion that one-fifth of the value should be paid down and the remainder paid in the shape of a quit-rent, 6087. 6097–6126. 6172–6194. 6218–6232. 6241, 6242.

Grounds for considering that a perpetual quit-rent should not be looked at in the light of a special tax on a particular industry, 6113–6119——Important fact that the perpetual quit-rent would prove a perpetual source of revenue to the local authority, and so justify that body in carrying out the proposed system, 6125, 6126.

Strong view that the responsibility of providing buildings should be undertaken by the holder alone, and not in any way by the local authority; grounds for this opinion, 6127–6136. 6162–6164. 6293–6296.

Information with regard to the character of the property owned by University College, of which witness is the manager; the average size of the individual allotments let by the College has increased from one-and-a-quarter to two acres, 6139–6148. 6207–6210——Statement that at Linton the property of the College is not leased, but held on annual rents; disinclination of the College authorities to disturb those tenants whose families have held the farms under these terms for hundreds of years, 6143–6148.

Approval of giving to local authorities compulsory powers to purchase; belief that many landlords would welcome compulsory powers for the reason that they desire to increase small holdings, 6154–6158. 6201. 6233–6235. 6300–6302——Considerable advantage in creating small ownerships as well as small holdings under a landlord, 6159–6162. 6236, 6237.

Similarity of the proposals made by witness to the provisions contained in Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill for providing small holdings; the principal difference between the two is that Mr. Collings provides that the quit-rent should permanently remain at three-fourths, whereas witness proposes that it should be reduced to two-fifths, 6195–6197——Suggestion that Mr. Collings' Bill should also be supplemented by a provision to allow a central authority to lend money for the purchase of isolated tenancies, 6200.

Further evidence in elucidation of witness' views on various points in connection with the system of small holdings, 6201 *et seq.*——Disapproval of the small holder being empowered to redeem the perpetual quit-rent; expediency also of enforcing provisions against sub-letting or sub-dividing, which would result from redemption of the quit-rent, 6321–6332.

G.

Game (*Grouse Moors and Deer Forests*). Contention that grouse moors and deer forests should only be exempted from compulsory purchase by the owners paying rates of 5*s.* an acre; argument that where people require land for subsistence the question of interference with game should not stand in the way, *Dodd* 5567–5581——Belief that the landowners in a large part of both Perthshire and East Lothian have got over all difficulties with the smaller holders about game, *Haldane* 8223–8225.

Germany. Particulars of the German system for the transfer of land, which is highly approved by witness; very small amount of the public fees, the transfers being as a rule effected without legal assistance, *Arnold* 324–332. 377. 451, 452. 489–496.

See also *Prussia.*

Gibbons,

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

Gibbons, William. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness works in the boot and shoe trade at Wellingborough, and has a small holding of three acres; he is secretary of the Wellingborough Permanent Allotment Association, 3527-3533.

Acquisition by the association five years ago of a farm of 183 acres, on lease, at a rent of 320 *l.* 5 *s.* a year, which they have let out in plots of from ten poles to seven or eight acres, there being about 200 holders, 3534-3543. 3651——Information respecting the working of the foregoing arrangement and the very successful results achieved; great increase of production, whilst the farm is worth about 1,000 *l.* more than it was before sub-division, 3544-3554. 3595. 3651-3659.

Total of about 500 acres of allotments and small holdings around Wellingborough; great boon if there were 5,000; 3550-3555. 3597 *et seq.*——Expediency of the holdings varying in size from ten acres upwards, 3556, 3557. 3603——Calculations as to the results to be produced by holders of twenty acres, and of larger and smaller areas, after payments for rent, manure, and other expenses; contention that with twenty or twenty-five acres a very good income may be derived, 3558-3567. 3595, 3596. 3617. 3625. 3673. 3685.

Strong advocacy of a system of small leaseholds, with fixity of tenure; difficulty as to ownership if men were required to pay down one-fourth of the purchase money, 3568-3574. 3660, 3661. 3686-3699——Examination as regards Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill to the effect that though it would doubtless operate beneficially, it is expedient to at once apply the compulsory principle so as to secure a sufficient amount of land being available, 3575-3596. 3626. *et seq.* 3686-3719.

Difficulty apprehended unless there be compulsion, not only upon the landlord to sell but upon the local authority to buy; examination hereon as to the actual facilities to be given by the latter to small holders, 3578-3596. 3626-3650. 3662-3672. 3686-3719——Consideration of the outlay required on the score of buildings on each small holding and the means of meeting this expense, 3597-3616.

Aversion on the part not only of landlords, but of farmers to the acquisition of small holdings by agricultural labourers, 3637-3646. 3666-3672——Small size of allotment contemplated for men who are occupied in different trades, such as shoemakers, 3720-3723——Large number of men in Wellingborough who could utilise holdings up to thirty acres, 3723-3726.

Conclusion generally that if agricultural labourers be given adequate facilities to acquire small holdings, it will be the "finest thing for the country that has ever been granted," 3726.

Glebe Lands. Importance of Clause 8 of the Glebe Lands Act of 1888 as facilitating sales of glebe, *Arnold* 210-216——Disposition of witness to advocate that glebe land, other than that connected with the incumbent's house and curtilage, should be sold in small parcels by compulsory authority, whenever expedient; these lands are the worst cultivated in the kingdom, *ib.* 216-219. 222-229.

Absence of trustworthy returns as to the extent of the glebe lands, except Parliamentary Return, No. 307, of 1887; belief, however, that an average of twenty acres for 10,000 benefices and a gross annual value of 400,000 *l.* would not be an excessive estimate, *Arnold* 220-229. 521-525——Opinion that the Glebe Lands Act might be made compulsory and applicable to the public lands, and that private land might be taken by purchase or exchange, *ib.* 230, 231. 455-458.

Total of 659,548 acres of glebe land distributed throughout the country, and peculiarly suitable for small ownerships, *Collings* 717-719——Proposal that there be a restriction upon the sale of glebe lands to private owners, and that the local authorities should have power to purchase small holdings, but without preventing sale for allotments, *ib.* 718. 720, 721.

Sale of about 28,900 acres of glebe lands by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (for 2,000,000 *l.*), chiefly to adjacent landowners; sales also through the Land Commission, *Porter* 2695, 2696. 2753-2758——Correction of certain evidence as to the total area of glebe lands and the estimated value, *ib.* 2697——Very uneven distribution of the glebe lands; large number under fifty acres, *ib.* 2698. 2750-2752.

Approval of sale to the local authorities for the creation of small holdings; that is, on fair and adequate terms, *Porter* 2699-2706——More frequent disturbance of glebe tenants than of ordinary tenants, *ib.* 2707-2716——Difficulty on the score of buildings and dilapidations in the way of incumbents letting their glebe in allotments or small holdings, *ib.* 2779-2784.

Unsatisfactory condition of glebe lands in consequence of the absence of capital outlay on improvements, *Punchard* 7074, 7075.

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H.

Haddingtonshire. See *Industrial Societies* (*Scotland*).

Haldane, Richard Burdon (Member of the House). (Analysis of his Evidence).—Witness is a member of the English bar and has taken great interest in the land question as affecting small holdings, especially as regards Scotland, 8072–8074.

Result of witness' experience in Haddingtonshire that there is a willingness generally on the part of the owners to sell land for small holdings, but that the difficulty consists in getting the labourers to purchase, 8075-8079. 8092, 8093. 8121–8130. 8191–8193——Information as to the effect of the Building Society Acts, showing the manner in which plots of land are acquired by members of building societies; these Acts are not taken advantage of either in Scotland or England for the purpose of acquiring small holdings for agricultural purposes, 8080–8089. 8226–8229.

Explanation respecting the difference between the scheme of the Building Society Acts and that of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876, the latter enabling the societies to hold land and raise buildings on it; incorporation of such a society in Haddingtonshire, 8089-8091. 8108–8112. 8176–8182——Strong advocacy by witness of the introduction into Scotland of something in the nature of the Settled Land Act, which exists in England, in order to remove the difficulties in the way of small sales of land, 8094, 8095.

Doubt whether the allotment system ever took root to any considerable extent throughout Scotland; preference of the agricultural labourers for a garden instead of an allotment, 8096–8100. 8139, 8140. 8245, 8246——Tendency in Scotland in recent years towards the consolidation of small farms, 8101–8103. 8239–8244.

Desirability of the machinery proposed in Mr. Jesse Collings' Small Holdings Bill being applied to Scotland, 8104-8107. 8118, 8119. 8154, 8155——Opinion that the Building Society Acts and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act give sufficient facilities for the creation of small holdings; disapproval of the removal of the 500*l.* stamp limit, 8113–8115. 8152, 8153.

Calculation that under the society incorporated in Haddingtonshire the members will be able to acquire holdings of forty to fifty acres in fee-simple at the end of forty-nine years by the payment of nothing more than a fair rent; intention of creating the holdings in the neighbourhood of large towns and villages, 8116–8120. 8131–8136. 8183–8190. 8231, 8232——Statement that in cases where the proposed tenant is unable to pay for the necessary buildings and stock on the holding, the aid of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act could be called in, 8137, 8138. 8215–8222. 8233–8238.

Opinion that in the event of powers being given to acquire land for promoting a system of small holdings, the principle adopted in the Ashbourne Act in Ireland might be properly extended to England and Scotland, 8141–8144——Growing interest among agricultural labourers in Scotland, in spite of their comfortable condition, in the acquisition of small holdings; superior intelligence of the Scotch agricultural labourer as compared with the English, 8145-8151. 8197 *et seq.* 8230.

Desire of the miners in witness' constituency for a more secure tenure of their houses, rather than for small plots of land, 8156–8158. 8168–8175——Evidence in favour of a scheme under which a man would get his land in forty-nine years, minus a quit-rent of 5*s.* per acre payable to the local authority for ever, 8159–8165. 8194–8196. 8199–8206.

Opinion that the labour power would be more completely utilised on small than on large farms 8166, 8167——Desirability of the unearned increment going to the community rather than to individuals; doubt, however, as to whether the terms of the Allotment Act, with guaranteed perpetuity of tenure at a just rent added, would satisfy the Scotch peasant, who wants a freehold, 8200–8214. 8247 *et seq.*

Belief that the landowners in a large part of both Perthshire and East Lothian have got over all difficulties about game, &c., 8223–8225——Information as to the feu duty in Scotland, the amount varying from an insignificant sum to the full value of the property, the modern feus being enormously high, 8249–8257.

Highlands (*Scotland*). See *Crofters. Legislation. Scotland.*

Holland. Particulars of a system of perpetual tenure and small holdings in parts of Holland, very similar to that advocated by witness; satisfactory cultivation under this system, *Collings* 602–607. 648–654. 769–772——Much larger proportion of cultivating owners in Holland than in England, *ib.* 648, 649——Cultivation of twenty-five acres per man in Holland, *ib.* 651——Advantage claimed for witness' scheme as compared with the systems in force in Holland and Denmark, *ib.* 774.

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

Holman, William. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness is a bricklayer and a registration agent at New Bilton, near Rugby; he is well conversant with the condition of the agricultural population, his father having been an agricultural labourer, 2796–2799. 2947, 2948. 3002, 3003.

Great desire on the part of rural labourers to obtain allotments or small holdings; strong and growing feeling in favour of the latter, 2800-2807——Expediency of facilities for the acquisition of holdings of from two or three up to sixty or seventy acres, according to the circumstances of each case, 2808–2812.

Proposition that the local authority should provide not only the land for agricultural labourers, but loans for stocking and working it; examination hereon as to the degree of risk to be incurred thereby by the ratepayers, 2813-2826. 2903-2927. 2975-2991. 3012-3031. 3059-3078. 3125-3127——Opinion that the landlord should be compelled to lease to the local authority, the latter leasing to the tenants, 2826–2831. 3185–3190.

Particulars of several instances of men who have been very successful on working allotments and small holdings, and have gradually increased the acreage under cultivation; large production in some of these cases as compared with that of adjacent farms, 2832-2842. 2849 *et seq.* 2992–2996. 3032–3039. 3079–3088——Suggestions respecting the provision of buildings on small holdings, the character and cost of these varying greatly under different circumstances, 2843-2845. 2848. 2983–2991. 3128, 3129——Decided approval of arrangements, if feasible, whereby the labourers should become in time the owners of the land, 2846, 2847.

Instance of a family having gradually progressed from a holding of two and a-half acres to a total holding of forty-eight and three-quarter acres, 2867–2870. 3032-3036——Insufficient employment of agricultural labourers by farmers, so that their employment on allotments or small holdings of their own is necessary for their maintenance; illustrations of the very successful cultivation attained by this means, 2879-2895. 2928–2939. 2969–2973. 3008–3011.

Advantage, doubtless, of Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill in so far as it would help those who already had some money to start with; numerous class, on the other hand, without any means, 2898-2905. 3166–3190——Question considered whether a baker or other tradesman has not as much right as an agricultural labourer to assistance from the local authority; respects in which the two cases are not analogous, 2906–2910. 3059–3078.

Examination as to the security which the small holder could give for any loan from the local authority towards stocking the land; admitted difficulty on the score that the ratepayers' money must not be unduly risked, 2911 2927——Great demand among labouring men in witness' district for land to be hired; growing desire to purchase, 2934-2942. 2947–2951. 2997–2999. 3004–3006. 3132–3135.

Discrimination to be exercised by the local authority as to the class of men to be assisted with loans; considerable advantage even if advances be restricted to men already holding allotments, and to the security offered by the land exclusively, 2943-2946. 2974-2982. 3008-3078. 3123-3127——Suggestions as to the varying size of the holdings to be taken in the first instance by men, according to the number in family, the money at their disposal, and other circumstances; conclusion that in course of time many of the labouring classes would, with the proposed help, gradually and successfully extend their holdings from very small beginnings, 2952 *et seq.*

Very low wages of agricultural labourers, so that without allotments they cannot support their families, 2969-2973. 3040–3052. 3130, 3131——Several obstacles at present in witness' district to the acquisition of small holdings by labourers; difficulties raised by farmers as well as by landowners, 2997-2999. 3089-3099. 3107, 3108. 3170-3173——General tendency of labourers to migrate to the towns; expediency of their productive employment on the land, 3000, 3001.

Considerable depression in the farming interest in witness' locality; great mistake in the consolidation of farms, 3007, 3008. 3104-3108——Advantage to be conferred by Bill giving permissive powers to local authorities to acquire land for conversion into small holdings, though witness would prefer compulsory powers, 3089–3099. 3150–3190.

Beneficial result if small village tradesmen had facilities for renting or buying small holdings, 3101–3103——Information with further reference to the large production on small holdings and the mode of cultivation, 3109–3122. 3139–3149.

Entire concurrence in the view that the local authority, as lending the ratepayers' money, must see to the goodness of the security, 3150–3165——Incentive to thrift if rural labourers were assisted, as under the Bill of Mr. Jesse Collings, in acquiring small holdings, 3166–3169. 3174. 3182–3184——Expediency of restrictions upon subletting by men who have been aided with capital, as proposed, 3175–3181.

Horses. Advantage, as regards cultivation, from the larger relative number of horses on small than on large farms, *Collings* 991, 992.

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Report, 1889—*continued.*

Horses—continued.

Total number on groups of different classes of holdings in 1875 and 1885, *App.* 505.

See also *Stock* (*Horses, &c.*)

Hughes, Price. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Various occupations of witness, who lives at Towyn, Merioneth; he is well conversant with the condition and wants of the local agricultural population, 4079-4082.

Great obstacles to the creation of small holdings in North Wales, the landlords being unwilling to sell, the cost of transfer being great, and the difficulty of borrowing the purchase money at a low rate of interest being considerable, 4083-4094. 4230-4233——Examination in support of the conclusion that the State should lend money at the lowest possible rate of interest for the purchase of small holdings, and also for the erection by the landlords of the required buildings; inexpediency of any loss by the State, 4095-4124——Very high initial charges in connection with loans; illustration in the case of a loan from the Land Commissioners, 4125-4142.

Necessity of compulsory powers, in order to create additional small holdings in Wales, by sub-division of the larger farms; consideration of objections to the working of this proposal, 4143, 4144. 4168. 4226-4268. 4280-4293——Suggestion that the area of each holding should not be less than fifty acres; means of obtaining a living therefrom if fairly good land, 4145. 4244. 4329-4339——Information as to the number, size, and rent of small holdings in witness' district; diminished number of late years through consolidation, and in former years through inclosures, 4146-4162. 4204-4212. 4223-4225. 4234-4253.

Better and larger production per acre on small than on large farms, 4163-4167——Approval of purchasers of small holdings being required to find one-fourth of the purchase money; difficulty doubtless in the case of agricultural labourers, 4169-4189. 4294-4306—— Proposal as to the local authority providing not only the land, but the buildings, and as to agricultural labourers being thereby facilitated in renting small farms, 4176-4203.

Statement on the subject of landlords not sub-dividing their estates and providing the required buildings, it being difficult for them to raise money for the latter at moderate rates, 4195-4203. 4213-4222——Expediency of a restriction upon the re-consolidation of small holdings, after creation through the local authorities, 4238-4244. 4326-4328——Explanation that witness approves of landlords being helped to restore and erect buildings, but only as a condition of the provision of small holdings, 4269-4279.

Earnings of agricultural labourers in witness' district adverted to in connection with the prospect of their becoming small farmers or freeholders, 4294-4312——Advantage of security of tenure, as by means of a small quit-rent, 4307-4312. 4316-4320——Prejudicial effect upon small farmers in Wales when deprived of sheep walks on the mountains, 4313-4315.

Instances of the cultivating tenants having to compete with outsiders where the farms are put up for sale; obstacle thereby to the former becoming freeholders, 4321-4324——Expediency of the outgoing tenant being compensated for improvements, 4325——Better condition of the rural population, and decrease of the poor rates, if small holdings were multiplied, even at some risk to the local authority, 4340-4346.

I.

Imports. Enormous import of cheese, poultry, bacon, eggs, and other articles suitable for cultivation on small holdings at home, *Collings* 151-160——Examination as to the quantity and value of bacon, ham, cheese, butter, margarine, and other articles imported from countries where small holdings prevail; admission that bacon, cheese, and hams come mainly from the United States and Canada, where the holdings are for the most part large, *ib.* 1017-1040——Point of witness' argument that the articles in question are very suitable for production on small holdings in this country, *ib.* 1020. 1029-1032.

Immense consumption of foreign articles of food by England, *Pell* 1374——Insignificant amount of the food imports of this country from small farm countries, *Craigie* 5087, 5088.

Argument that, while under the present circumstances of the tenure of land, we import 135,000,000 *l.* of food products, we should under the Small Holdings Act be able to produce the same articles to the extent of 50,000,000 *l.*, *Morgan* 5957.

Statements of the quantities and values of some of the smaller articles of food imported in the year 1886, *App.* 498——Statistics of import of fruit and vegetables from the Channel Islands and from the United States, *ib.* 506.

See also *Butter.*

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Improvements. See *Buildings. Compensation for Improvements. Ownerships or Tenancies.*

INCLOSURES:

Almost total extinction of the large class of peasant proprietors who formerly existed in this country; disappearance of this class due mainly to the great extension of inclosures, public and private, in former times, *Collings* 62–98. 132——Statistics and explanations as to the excessive inclosures of wastes and commons, and the great number of Inclosure Acts, in the present century and previously thereto; this has been fatal to the peasant class and the commoners, though it was doubtless done mainly for the public good, *ib.* 66–98. 125–134.

Amended principles of legislation laid down in the Inclosure Acts of 1845 and 1876 as stipulating that inclosures must be for the good of the whole neighbourhood, *Collings* 99–101——Check in so far as inclosures must now be sanctioned by the Land Commission, *ib.* 101.

Comment upon inclosures through the action of the lord of the manor in arranging with the commoners; this applies chiefly to new lords, the old lords having more consideration for the rural population, *Collings*, 103–105. 184——Strong opinion that the rights of the lord as to inclosures should be stopped altogether, *ib.* 105.

Statement to the effect that the commoners and small occupiers have practically received no compensation in respect of inclosures since 1845, though the Act of that year and of 1876 provided compensation in the discretion of the Inclosure Land Commissioners; very small acreage assigned to the labouring poor out of the inclosures, *Collings* 125–131——Extinction of the rights and privileges of the commoners, partly through their inability to be represented before the Commissioners, *ib.* 130, 131——Great and numerous difficulties in the way of any restitution or restoration of the inclosures to their former uses; necessary abandonment by witness of a Bill which he proposed to submit to Parliament for this purpose, *ib.* 161–165.

Further reference to former inclosures as having increased the yield of food and led to increased cultivation, though they have been most prejudicial to a large class of small cultivators, *Collings* 680–682. 766——Proposal that steps be taken for securing that former inclosures are duly cultivated, *ib.* 693.

Full admission that immense benefit has resulted to agriculture from inclosures and the diminution of small holdings, but with the extinction of the class of commoners, the increase of pauperism, and other evils; examination in detail hereon, witness submitting the entire inadequacy of the compensation given or of the allotments reserved to the commoners and others, *Collings* 862–905.

Reiteration of statement that the class of small cultivators have been squeezed out of existence by the inclosures which have been made mainly in the latter part of the last century and the first part of the present century; inclosure of some 7,000,000 acres of land under Private Acts previously to 1845; *Collings* 1512–1515. 1617–1621.

Long and persistent struggle on the part of the peasantry in former times to retain their land against encroachments and inclosures, and to make a stand against the harsh or illegal exercise of manorial rights, but without success, *Collings* 1617–1621.

Undoubted effect of inclosure to diminish the number of persons who would probably take advantage of any facilities to become small owners, *Arnold* 353–356——Examination upon the question whether there has not been a great diminution of small holdings in England as the result of public and private inclosures in former years, *Pell* 1281. 1424–1441——Great increase of produce through the carrying out of inclosures and the consolidation of farms, though unsatisfactory otherwise, *Squarey* 3786–3788. 3863–3866. 3886–3901.

Arbitrary character of many of the inclosures made by landowners; contention by landlords that they are entitled to inclose to within fifteen feet of the centre of the highway, *Fyffe* 6026–6033——Proposal that the illegal inclosure of a common or other waste land should be punished by imprisonment, without the option of a fine; expediency of imposing on a smaller local body than the County Council the duty of watching over the common rights, *ib.* 6032, 6033. 6211–6217. 6257–6263.

Absence of complaint, so far as witness is aware, in regard to the compensation awarded under Inclosure Acts, *Druce* 7439——Quotation from Report of the Inclosure Commissioners for 1877, as showing the exceedingly beneficial operation of the General Inclosure Act of 1845, nearly 600,000 acres having been dealt with under the Act, and a considerable addition made to the number of small owners, *ib.* 7439–7442. 7588–7590.

Examination in detail as to the numerous inclosures of commons and other land since 1845 and in former times, witness taking exception to the conclusion that the peasantry and poorer classes have been greatly injured thereby, and that the compensation in the form of allotments, field gardens, &c., has been altogether inadequate, *Druce* 7725–7798. 7945–7961.

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Result of witness' experience that in all cases where a question arises on some encroachment or inclosure of a common it is invariably the small holder who is the first to complain, *Birkett* 8845, 8846——Prejudicial effect of inclosure as regards the interests of small holders, whose number it reduces; impossibility of many of the smallest holders succeeding at a distance from the commons, *ib.* 8862–8879. 8883, 8884. 8892–8894. 8991–8996.

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Explanation respecting the difference between the scheme of the Building Society Acts and that of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876, the latter enabling the societies to hold land and raise buildings on it; incorporation of such a society in Haddingtonshire, *Haldane* 8089–8091. 8108-8112. 8176-8182——Calculation that under the society incorporated in Haddingtonshire the members will be able to acquire holdings of forty to fifty acres in fee-simple at the end of forty-nine years by the payment of nothing more than a fair rent; intention of creating the holdings in the neighbourhood of large towns and villages, *ib.* 8116–8120. 8131-8136. 8183–8190. 8231, 8232——Statement to the effect that in cases where the proposed tenant is unable to pay for the necessary buildings and stock on the holding, the aid of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act will be called in, *ib.* 8137, 8138. 8215–8222. 8233–8238.

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Johnson, George. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness, who lives at Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire, is a small holder, cultivating about seven acres of land; is also a retailer of beer, 6692-6697——The total cost of this holding, including legal charges, was 393 *l.* 14 *s.*; 6698–6704.

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Great demand in the neighbourhood of Long Sutton for small holdings; there is quite a land hunger in the district, 6757-6765. 6837-6841——Considerable difficulties which exist in regard to obtaining land for small holdings in the district; tendency to increase the size of farms rather than to encourage small holdings, 6760–6765. 6908–6910.

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Strong opinion that the risk to the local authorities in lending the whole of the purchase-money would be very small, 6793-6802. 6808, 6809. 6896-6907——Suggestions for a system of village committees in every parish to administer the scheme in regard to letting the land in small holdings, 6853-6855. 6911-6913——Statement to the effect that the larger farmers are not as prosperous as the small holders in the same degree, 6889-6895.

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Jones, Griffith. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Witness has been a solicitor, and has had very considerable experience of the agricultural conditions of Cardiganshire, 9448, 9449.

Large number of small owners and occupiers in Cardiganshire, the average size of the properties being sixty or seventy acres; demand for these small holdings still increasing, although the purchaser has to stand at a higher rent than if he were tenant, 9450-9460. 9479-9483. 9549-9551——Grounds for the belief that the occupiers being themselves the owners of the land is a great social advantage; prosperous condition of the Cardiganshire freeholders, 9461, 9462. 9469-9478. 9565-9572. 9606-9608.

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Obstacle to the acquisition of small holdings in the Bala district through the want of capital or of facilities for obtaining loans at a low rate of interest, 4750-4762——Advocacy of compulsory powers in local authorities for the purchase of land and for subdividing it, providing the necessary buildings, and letting it to small tenants, 4763 *et seq.*——Grounds for the opinion that the land should be bought of the local authority by valuation instead of by public auction, 4769-4778. 4798-4811. 4861. 4940-4945 *et seq.*

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Advantage of the greater labour expended in cultivation where the holdings are small, witness fully approving of subdivision of land where the soil and the surroundings are favourable to small holdings, *Squarey* 3789-3799. 3805, 3806. 3945-3949.

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4054-4057——Statement that in the smaller farms, there being more labour put into the land, there is consequently no waste, and every foot of ground is made the most of, *Bidwell* 5105, 5106——Typical case of a farm of nineteen acres, in Chatteris, Isle of Ely, which was worked entirely by a man and his own family; one horse only kept on this farm, *ib.* 5168. 5221-5230. 5294-5298. 5324-5327.

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Land Commission. Opinion that in the event of the difficulties of the interposition of a local authority proving insuperable, the alternative is a Land Commission, who should make sales as quickly as possible, giving preference to small holders; recommendation that the Commission should also have authority to advance a certain proportion of the purchase-money, within a limit of 500 *l.*; *Arnold* 281-289. 529-534.

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Considerable benefit already conferred upon the agricultural population by the facilities under the Acts of 1882 and 1887 for the acquisition of allotments, *Collings* 6-8——Restrictive statutes in force in former times against the undue consolidation of farms and the eviction of small occupiers, *ib.* 54——Necessity of further legislation, though there is some tendency in owners to subdivide large farms, *ib.* 781-783.

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Conclusion as to the necessity of legislation, the landlords generally not being favourable to the creation of small holdings, *Ripley* 2419-2422. 2438, 2439——Expediency of further legislation for increasing the facilities for forming small holdings, *Dodd* 5460, 5461; *Smith* 6377, 6378; *Rigby* 7296, 7297.

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Questionable expediency of introducing legislation for the purpose of re-creating small ownerships

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Lincolnshire. Cultivation by witness of about seven acres of land at Long Sutton; he is also a retailer of beer, *Johnson* 6692-6697——The total cost of this holding, including legal charges, was 393 *l.* 14 *s.*; *ib.* 6698-6704——Information respecting the character of the land and of the crops raised upon it; the result has been eminently satisfactory, *ib.* 6705-6736. 6830-6836. 6870-6880——Statement handed in showing the annual profits of his holding for the years 1885 to 1888; net profit of about 3 *l.* 4 *s.* 8 *d.* per acre, *ib.* 6719-6736.

Examination as regards small holdings generally in the neighbourhood of Long Sutton, which amount in the aggregate to about 418 acres; rare occurrence for the small holders to get into difficulties and go upon the parish, *Johnson* 6737-6765. 6826-6829. 6856-6869. 6881-6895. 6914-6920.

Opinion that there has been no diminution of small holders in the county, *Druce* 7408——Great depression in agriculture at the time of witness' official inquiry under the Richmond Commission, many of the small holders in the Isle of Axholme and throughout Lincolnshire having been very badly off; bad condition at present of the small freeholders in East Lincolnshire, *ib.* 7891-7919——Varying opinions as to their condition; instances of the value attached by them to small ownerships, *ib.* 7892-7911.

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Littlemore (Oxford). Probable explanation of the high rent fetched by a plot of one and three-quarter acres near Littlemore (Oxford), as compared with the rent of an adjoining farm, *Druce* 8036-8050.

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in the neighbourhood of Ashdown Forest; the majority are ownerships and not tenancies, 6404-6406.

Impossibility of getting land for small holdings elsewhere than in the uncultivated part of the forest; inclination of the landlords rather to add to their own property than to sell it to the people, 6407-6411. 6496, 6497——Statement as to the price of the land taken from the forest and sold as freeholds; calculation that the cost, including the law expenses and the title, is about 36 *l.* an acre, 6411, 6412. 6436-6442. 6464.

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LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

1. *Advocacy of the Creation of Small Holdings through the Action of the Local Authorities; Exceptions taken thereto.*
2. *Question of Profit being made by the Local Authorities, in the Interests of the Ratepayers; conflicting Evidence as to the Risk to be incurred.*

1. *Advocacy of the Creation of Small Holdings through the Action of the Local Authorities; Exceptions taken thereto:*

Argument that the required facilities for the extension of small holdings can best be given through the local authorities, rather than directly by the State, *Collings* 171-176——Explanation that the local authorities would be merely quit-rent receivers, through the tax collectors, but should enforce provisions against sub-letting and for the cultivation of the land, *ib.* 571-583.

Advocacy of extensive powers in the local authorities with reference to commons and uncultivated lands, charity lands, Crown lands, and glebe lands, *Collings* 686 *et seq.*——Entire confidence of witness in local authorities, as at present constituted for carrying out the proposed scheme, *ib.* 757-761——Non-objection to some limit to the extent of operations of the local authorities, *ib.* 785——Approval of the local authority buying holdings of from twenty-five to fifty acres as well as large holdings, *ib.* 1601-1604.

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Advantages of the plan proposed by Mr. Jesse Collings for the creation of small holdings through the local authorities, the occupiers having security of tenure upon payment of one-fourth of the purchase money and being liable for interest on the remaining three-fourths, *Ripley* 2399-2407.

Value of Mr. Collings' Bill in so far as it would help those who already had some money to start with; numerous class on the other hand without any means, *Holman* 2898-2905. 3166-3190——Advantage to be conferred by a Bill giving permissive powers to local authorities to acquire land for conversion into small holdings, though witness would prefer compulsory powers, 3089-3099. 3150-3190.

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Suggestion

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LOCAL AUTHORITIES—continued.

1. *Advocacy of the Creation of Small Holdings, &c.*—continued.

Suggestion that the local authorities should be empowered to take land for the purpose of providing small holdings; approval also, if it were possible, that the local authority should provide money for the purpose of stocking the land, *Robertson* 6547–6560. 6626–6634.

Approval of the local authorities taking the land in the first instance to let out to the tenants; suggestion that the former should advance the whole of the purchase money and allow the labourers to become the owners at the end of a term of years, *Johnson* 6770–6825.

Conclusions as to the inexpediency of empowering the local authorities to advance money for the creation of small holdings; belief that the tenants would prefer their present landlords to the local authorities as landlords, *Punchard* 7038–7068. 7103–7106. 7167–7173. 7183. 7248–7270—Suggestions as to the best system for facilitating the purchase of the holdings through the local authorities; inexpediency of their advancing the whole of the purchase money, *Rigby* 7298–7320.

Summary of reasons in support of the conclusion that the proposition of Mr. Jesse Collings for a system of loans to small cultivators, through the local authorities, is very imprudent and impolitic, *Druce* 7450–7468.

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2. *Question of Profit being made by the Local Authorities, in the Interests of the Ratepayers; conflicting Evidence as to the Risk to be incurred:*

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Examination to the effect that under witness' scheme of loans by local authorities to small cultivators there would be no such risk of loss to the ratepayers, even in times of depression, as should militate against the adoption of the scheme, *Collings* 1065–1083.

Important advantage in so far as the ratepayers would be benefited by the scheme; examination hereon as to the rate at which the local authority can borrow, and the excess rate to be charged to the cultivator, *Collings* 1546. 1548–1563—Further statement as to there being ample security against loss to the ratepayers in the event of bad cultivation by the tenant, *ib.* 1568–1576.

Consideration of the proposed power in local authorities to buy land, by means of the rates, and to advance one-fourth of the purchase-money to small holders, receiving a perpetual quit-rent; objection mainly on the score of risk to the ratepayers, *Pell* 1248 *et seq.* 1334–1349. 1413 *et seq.*—Belief that local authorities could raise loans and administer a system of small holdings with a profit of 4 or 5 per cent., *Lord Wantage* 1956–1959. 1967—Sufficient security of local authorities under a rent-charge system, *Ripley* 2569–2585. 2606, 2607.

Proposition that the local authority should provide not only the land for agricultural labourers but loans for stocking and working it; examination hereon as to the degree of risk to be incurred thereby by the ratepayers, *Holman* 2813–2826. 2903–2929. 2975–2991. 3012–3031. 3059–3078. 3125–3127—Question considered whether a baker or

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Local Authorities—continued.

2. *Question of Profit being made by the Local Authorities, &c.*—continued.

other tradesman has not as much right as an agricultural labourer to assistance from the local authority towards stocking the land; admitted difficulty on the score that the ratepayers' money must not be unduly risked, *Holman* 2911-2927.

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Distinct

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Peasant proprietary nearly unknown in Forfarshire and Perthshire; considerable number of small agricultural tenancies in these counties, *Duncan* 9322-9340——Particulars of the successful experiments made by the late Lord Panmure and Lord Dalhousie to multiply small farms, *ib.* 9340-9352——Great demand for small holdings in Forfarshire, Perthshire, Haddingtonshire, and East Lothian, *ib.* 9383-9388.

See also *Allness.* *Consolidation of Farms.* *Crofters.* *Feu System.* *Fifeshire.* *Game.* *Legislation.* *Matheson, Sir Alexander.* *Supply and Demand.*

Security of Property. Considerable value attached to a multiplication of small freeholds in increasing the security of property, *Lord Wantage* 1754-1759. 1787. 1834——Desirability on social and political grounds that there should be a large number of landholders dotted about the country; belief that the large landowners would themselves be only too glad to see an increase of small holdings, *Punchard* 7008-7012. 7019.

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Security of Tenure. Important advantage claimed for witness' scheme as securing fixity of tenure and other rights of ownership, *Collings* 557-563. 571-574. 587-595——Non-objection to perpetual leaseholds in the hands of the local authorities, though witness objects to private leaseholds, *ib.* 584-586——Expediency of some better security of tenure being provided for the very large number of existing small farmers in England and Wales; approval of their having a right of pre-emption in the event of sale of their holdings, *ib.* 1605-1616.

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Strong advocacy of a system of small leaseholds, with fixity of tenure; difficulty as to ownership if men were required to pay down one-fourth of the purchase-money, *Gibbons* 3568-3574. 3660, 3661. 3686-3699——Advantage of security of tenure, as by means of a small quit-rent, *Hughes* 4307-4312. 4316-4320 —— Great importance of giving the tenants of small holdings security of tenure, so that they should not be evicted except for non-payment of rent or for some other breach of condition of tenancy, *Dodd* 5674-5679.

Conclusion that if there are to be more numerous small holdings it is almost a necessity that there should be some system under which the tenant has such security of tenure that he may invest his capital in improvements with confidence, *Sir G. Campbell* 8679-8681. 8712.

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Statistics in support of opinion that the main hindrance to the creation of small holdings is caused by the accumulation of land in large estates, such accumulation being fostered and protected by the laws of primogeniture and settlement; belief that these influences are still in full operation, *Arnold* 193-204. 303-305. 319-323. 387-397. 404-414. 440-450.

Very little land for sale by landowners, save under Lord Cairns' Act; limited operation of the Act, *Collings* 779, 780——Great barrier to the creation of a peasant proprietary through the operation of the laws of entail and settlement, which should be abolished, *ib.* 1517-1523.

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Approval of giving the tenant-for-life power to sell, with three-fourths of the money to remain as a rent-charge; grounds for the opinion that this course would facilitate the voluntary creation of small holdings, *Dodd* 5701-5706——Strong view that land should not be made the subject of settlement or life estate; contention that until settlement is extinguished there will be very great difficulties in the way of cheapening land transfer, *Fyffe* 6045, 6046——Belief that the entire abolition of settlements would naturally bring a vast amount of land into the market, *ib.* 6054.

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Important effect of the Settled Land Act of 1881 in facilitating the sale and subdivisions of settled estates; instance in the case of some property of the Duke of Marlborough in Oxfordshire, *Druce* 7432-7437. 7540, 7541. 7657-7664. 7712-7720. 8008, 8009. 8016-8019. 8021-8029——Tendency of the law of primogeniture in cases of intestacy and of family settlements to cause the aggregation of land in few holdings, *ib.* 7561-7567——Impression as regards primogeniture that it was Norman French law, and that at the time of the Conquest it superseded the old Saxon law, *ib.* 8062-8071.

Tendency of the Settled Land Act to distribute the land by ordinary sale, *Birkett* 8925, 8926. 8931, 8932.

Sewage Farms. Unprofitable character of sewage farms in consequence of the nhanced cost of production, *Punchard* 7175-7177.

Sheep. Consideration of certain agricultural returns for Scotland and for England, with reference specially to the number of sheep on holdings of different sizes, the results being somewhat at variance with the conclusions arrived at from the statistics submitted by witness, *Collings* 973-990.

Total number in 1875 and 1885, distinguishing between groups of holdings; average in 1885, of sixty-seven per 100 acres, *App.* 505.

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SIZE

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Expediency of facilities for the acquisition of holdings of from two or three up to sixty or seventy acres, according to the circumstances of each case, *Holman* 2808-2812 —— Suggestions as to the varying size of the holdings to be taken in the first instance by men according to the number in family, the money at their disposal, and other circumstances; conclusion that in course of time many of the labouring classes would, with the proposed help, gradually and successfully extend their holdings from very small beginnings, *ib.* 2952 *et seq.*

Grounds for the opinion that a labourer may support himself and family on a holding of ten acres of good land, but not on five acres, without some extraneous means, *Standring* 3201–3207. 3259, 3260. 3321——Expediency of the holdings varying in size from ten acres upwards, *Gibbons* 3556, 3557. 3603——Conclusion that the formation of small holdings and their size must depend largely on the soil and the surroundings, there being many other considerations, *Squarey* 4054-4057.

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Approval of the proposal to utilise the municipalities not only as regards small, but also large allotments; doubt, however, as to the practicability of the proposal in view of the large size of the farms in demand in Scotland, *Sir G. Campbell* 8712——Statement that a holding of forty to fifty acres would enable a man and his family to subsist, and that in the vicinity of towns they could subsist on far less, *Duncan* 9265, 9266.

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Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company. Favourable conclusion as to the operation of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company; reference especially to an estate of the company at Cottenham, in Cambridgeshire, *Pell* 1219–1224. 1236–1239.

Explanations in detail respecting the constitution, objects, and operations of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company (of which witness is chairman); particulars with special reference to the Lamborne Estate of the company, the Cottenham and Histon estate, and the Foxham and Chippenham estate, *Lord Wantage* 1669 *et seq.*——Information as to the financial results; average dividend of 3 per cent., *ib.* 1672–1702. 1836–1840. 1887, 1888. 1950–1961.

Very limited applications to the company for the purchase of land, tenants, as a rule, preferring to hire; statement hereon as to the terms of purchase on the Lamborne and other estates, the arrangements as regards cottages and farm buildings, &c., *Lord Wantage* 1677 *et seq.*, 1836 *et seq.*——Sale of only two acres on the Lamborne estate at 26 *l.* an acre, and of seventeen acres at 21 *l.* an acre; explanation as to the payment

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Explanations in detail of the terms upon which witness purchased nineteen acres of land on the Lamborne estate (Berkshire), the provision of buildings, the mode of cultivation, and amount of stock, and the satisfactory results generally, the land being worked entirely by himself, *Warrack* 1982 *et seq.*

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"*Statesmen*" (*Cumberland and Westmoreland*). Great reduction in the number of "statesmen" in Cumberland and Westmoreland, these small freeholders having sold their properties to large landowners in good times, *Arnold* 421-425.

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new occupiers, *Owen* 4525-4540—— Concurrence in the proposal to prevent any sub-letting, subdivision, or consolidation of the small holdings created by the Bill; belief that the local authority would do its duty in respect of any infringement of the law, *G. Jones* 9523-9531. 9559, 9560.

Succession Duties. Advocacy of a graduated succession duty upon inheritance as one means of checking large accumulations of land under one ownership, *Arnold* 306-309. 506-511.

Suffolk. Examination as to the existing system and extent of small holdings in East Suffolk; conclusion that the tendency of late is to increase the number, *J. A. Smith* 7339-7353. 7371-7394.

Supply and Demand:

Great and growing desire of the rural classes for the possession of small holdings, *Collings* 6——General demand for small holdings, *ib.* 782——Other classes besides agricultural labourers among whom there is a demand for small holdings; doubt as to this demand being met to any appreciable extent, *ib.* 806-808. 818.

Admission that if there were a larger supply of land in the market, and the cost of transfer cheapened, there would still be a slight tendency towards the absorption of land by large capitalists, but that under reformed laws, land would be purchased by those who could make the best economic use of it, *Arnold* 205, 206. 393, 394. 462-464. 481-496——Increased desire on the part of the landlords to grant allotments, but not small holdings, *ib.* 465-472.

Statement to the effect that in witness' experience there is very little demand for small agricultural ownerships, though there is a demand for small tenancies; difficulty in the former case through the additional annual payments or instalments of purchase money, *Pell* 1225-1235. 1240, 1241. 1419-1423. 1451-1456——Experience of witness to the effect that there is no unsatisfied demand for small holdings, and that compulsory powers are unnecessary and inexpedient, *ib.* 1391 *et seq.*——No applications have been made to witness for the purchase of small holdings, *Lord Wantage* 1655.

Inexpediency of too many small holdings in the same locality, though in every parish there should be facilities for agricultural labourers and others to obtain them to a limited extent, *Ripley* 2383, 2384. 2516-2518——Conclusion that a per-centage, though a small one, of rural and village populations would find means to acquire small holdings if aided thereto by the local authorities, *ib.* 2587-2593——Great demand among labouring men in witness' district, Warwickshire, for land to be hired; growing desire to purchase, *Holman* 2800-2807. 2934-2942. 2947-2951. 2997-2999. 3004-3006. 3132-3135.

Instances of large areas in this country having been bought as a speculation for conversion into small holdings; results in this and other cases as regards the prices obtained, *Squarey* 3819, 3820. 4036-4043——Result of witness' experience as a director of the Small Farms Company that there is no great demand in England for small freeholds, whilst the landowners are now perfectly ready to sell sufficient land for meeting any demand that may arise without State intervention, *ib.* 3826-3862. 3915-3923. 4005-4015. 4048-4053. 4076-4078——Instances of the cultivating tenants having to compete with outsiders when the farms are put up for sale; obstacle thereby to the former becoming freeholders, *Hughes* 4321-4324——Demand for small holdings far in excess of the supply; that is, as tenants rather than owners, though many would doubtless avail themselves of facilities to purchase, *Owen* 4377-4387. 4433. 4493-4506. 4520-4524——Statement that any amount of land can be bought in England in large quantities, but very little in small quantities, *Morgan* 5904-5907.

Very great demand to rent small holdings of a suitable character; belief also that if facilities were afforded the demand to purchase them would also be very great, *Fyffe* 6076——Instance in which witness advertised a small farm of his own of thirty-three acres, and within three days he had applications from twenty-three persons, *ib.* 6076. 6271-6275——Explanation as to the difficulties in establishing small holdings at the present time; considerable desire on the part of the labourers, notwithstanding these difficulties, to obtain small holdings, *Smith* 6364-6376. 6380-6385.

Great demand in the neighbourhood of Long Sutton for small holdings; there is quite a land hunger in the district, *Johnson* 6757-6765. 6837-6841——Considerable difficulties which exist in regard to obtaining land for small holdings in the district; tendency to increase the size of farms rather than to encourage small holdings, *ib.* 6760-6765. 6908-6910.

Conclusion that farms of all sizes are required, and are now to be had, without artificial legislation, *Druce* 7498-7500. 7617-7619. 7649-7656. 8008-8019. 8029-8053——Practice of farmers who as owners have sold their holdings, not to take other farms; outside competition for the farms sold, *ib.* 7630-7635——Several instances of landlords' estates being sold in lots for small holdings, *ib.* 7657-7670.

Examination

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SUPPLY AND DEMAND—continued.

Examination in further support of the conclusion that under existing laws a sufficient number of small holdings are available to meet the natural demand, and that landowners are quite ready to sell to small purchasers at a fair price, *Druce* 8003-8053.

Conclusion that in addition to giving advantages to those already able to pay the required proportion to become small holders, the proposed Bill would open up a new career to the rising generation in rural districts, *Reid* 8650-8652. 8672-8675——Great demand, in counties where commons exist, for allotments, the demand for ownerships being considerably less, *Birkett* 8972-8974.

Belief that in Scotland there would be a demand to rent lands from the local authorities, and some desire to purchase in the immediate neighbourhood of the towns, *Alexander* 9078 *et seq.*——Statement that there is a very great demand among the labourers of Perthshire for small holdings both in the town and country districts, but great difficulty in obtaining them; feeling that there would be no objection to paying a little more to be owner than to the tenant, *Duncan* 9169-9180. 9250-9255.

See also *Axholme, Isle of. Lincolnshire. Minster Lovell. Number of Small Holdings. Ownerships or Tenancies. Scotland. Size of Holdings. Small Farm and Labourers' Company. Sub-Division of Holdings. Transfer of Land.*

T.

Technical Education (*Rural Schools*). Great advantage if technical agricultural education were given in the rural schools, *Ripley* 2594-2597.

Thrift. Decided encouragement to thrift under a system of small holdings, *Collings* 778; *Ripley* 2590-2593; *Holman* 3166-3169. 3174. 3182-3184——Favourable opinion as to the character of the smaller tenants in respect of industry and thrift; assertion that the smaller farms are worked better, in proportion to the larger holdings, *Bidwell* 5104-5109.

Prejudicial effect of loans from the rates as regards the independence of the agricultural classes and habits of thrift and industry, *Druce* 7452, 7453. 7461, 7462. 7556-7560. 7599-7604. 7833. 7962-7969.

Tithes. Suggestion for the redemption of tithes by the surrender of portion of the land, which might be converted into small holdings, *Collings* 728——Full powers of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in dealing with tithes and with their redemption, *Porter* 2788-2795——Very heavy tithes upon part of witness' holding, *Wimpenny* 3449-3452.

Title. Impossibility of having simplicity of title upon the 52,000,000 acres of settled land under the present condition of the law, *Arnold* 209——Disagreement of witness with the proposal in the Lord Chancellor's Bill that there shall be three kinds of titles; desire that in every case with which the register deals there shall be an indefeasible title, *ib.* 297-302——Instance of the great want of simplification of title, *Lord Wantage* 1757——Requirement of only forty years' title, instead of sixty, whilst deeds have been much shortened, *Druce* 7443——*See* also *Registration, &c. Transfer of Land.*

Towns. Probability that in Birmingham, Leicester, and other towns, the local authority might succeed better than in country districts in the creation of small freeholds, *Pell* 1263-1275.

Towyn District. See *Merionethshire.*

Transfer of Land. Reference to the difficulties and expense of land transfer as a great barrier to the creation of small holdings, *Collings* 64, 65——Decided approval of the transfer of land being cheapened in the interest of owners as well as purchasers, *Pell* 1455-1457——Strong approval of a multiplication of small landowners; facility and economy in the transfer of land being essential for this purpose, *Lord Wantage* 1665-1668. 1746-1758. 1811-1817.

Difficulty generally as to the sub-division of land on account of the great expense and delay of transfer; amended legislation in contemplation, *Squarey* 3741-3747. 4024-4031. 4058-4061——Entire approval of a system of transfer of land similar to that which exists in some of the colonies and in America; strong feeling that there should be in this country a simplification of transfer, *Bidwell* 5319-5321.

More moderate costs now charged in the conveyance of small holdings to purchasers; special reference hereon to the Isle of Axholme, *Druce* 7437, 7438. 7443-7446. 8008——Restrictions imposed upon small holders, as regards mortgaging, &c., by Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill; opinion that under that Bill the transfer of land can be accomplished without much legal expense, which is a very important advantage, *Reid* 8589-8594. 8676, 8677.

See also *Registration, &c. Settlement, &c.*

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U.

Unearned Increment. Proposal that the local authority, having obtained possession of the land, should be compelled to sell it in small freeholds, and that the unearned increment should be obtained by a payment in the form of a succession duty upon the capital value of the land, *Arnold* 278-280. 401. 504, 505——Consideration of the question of unearned increment, and of the circumstances under which the occupying owner or the local authority should be entitled, *Collings* 587-592. 788-801——Desirability of the unearned increment going to the community rather than to individuals; doubt, however, as to whether the terms of the Allotment Act with guaranteed perpetuity of tenure at a just rent added, would satisfy the Scotch peasant, who wants a freehold, *Haldane* 8200-8214. 8247 *et seq.*

United States. Tendency to smaller farms in the States, *Collings* 1033-1041——Difficulty in applying to this country the homestead law in force in the States, *ib.* 1631-1634.

University College (Oxford). Information with regard to the character of the property owned by University College; the average size of the individual allotments let by the College has increased from one and a-quarter to two acres, *Fyffe* 6139-6148. 6207-6210——Statement that at Linton (Yorkshire) the property of the College is not leased but held on annual rents; disinclination of the College authorities to disturb those tenants whose families have held the farms under these terms for hundreds of years, *ib.* 6143-6148.

V.

Value of Land. High value of good land, *Collings* 762-764——Great fall in the price of bad land, but not of really good land, *Pell* 1334-1336.

Examination as to the powers given under various Acts for settling the valuation and compensation to be paid for compulsory purchase; desirability in these valuations of having the Income Tax returns produced, *Dodd* 5480-5496. 5643-5646——Importance, in view of the extension of municipal life, that land for municipal and public purposes should be got at a fair price, *ib.* 5488, 5489.

Vegetables. Large extent to which vegetables are imported from countries which supply them earlier than we can grow them, *Craigie* 5087-5089.

See also *Channel Islands. Production.*

Village Committees. Suggestions for a system of village committees in every parish for administering the scheme proposed in regard to letting the land in small holdings, *Johnson* 6853-6855. 6911-6913.

Voluntary Effort. Conclusion as to the entire inadequacy of private efforts or the operation of companies as a means for the extended creation of small holdings throughout the country, *Collings* 166-170——Entire inadequacy of voluntary efforts for the subdivision of land among the poorer classes; illustration in the case of witness' company, though its operation has been very salutary, *Lord Wantage* 1756. 1845-1847. 1850-1865.——*See* also *Compulsory Powers.*

W.

WALES:

Entire dissent from the views of one of the Assistant Commissioners adverse to small holdings in Wales, *Collings* 186——Great obstacles to the creation of small holdings in North Wales, the landlords being unwilling to sell, the cost of transfer being great, and the difficulty of borrowing the purchase-money at a low rate of interest being considerable, *Hughes* 4083-4094. 4230-4233——Necessity of compulsory powers in order to create additional small holdings in Wales by subdivision of the larger farms; consideration of objections to the working of this proposal, *ib.* 4143, 4144. 4168. 4226-4228. 4280-4293.

Information as to the number, size, and rent of small holdings in the Towyn district; diminished number of late years through consolidation, and in former years through inclosures, *Hughes* 4146-4162. 4204-4212. 4223-4225. 4234-4253——Statement on the subject of landlords not sub-dividing their estates, and providing the required buildings, it being difficult for them to raise money for the latter at moderate rates, *ib.* 4195-4203. 4213-4222——Earnings of agricultural labourers in witness' district adverted to in connection with the prospect of their becoming small farmers or freeholders, *ib.* 4294-4312——Prejudicial effect upon small farmers when deprived of sheep-walks on the mountains, *ib.* 4313-4315.

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WALES—continued.

Result of witness' experience in Wales that a rent of about 50 *l.* a year would represent the holding sufficient for a man to live upon in the case of ordinary agricultural land, *Owen* 4353-4356. 4409——Belief that in the case of hill land a holding rented at about 20 *l.* a year would suffice for subsistence, *ib.* 4356-4358. 4409——Complaint in some districts of North Wales as to insecurity of tenure; this does not apply to Montgomeryshire, *ib.* 4391, 4392.

Reference to the evidence of Mr. Doyle before the Richmond Commission as not correctly representing the state of things in Wales in the matter of small buildings, *Owen* 4410-4413. 4429——Beneficial working in North Wales generally of cultivation by small holders; great importanee of facilities to these to utilise portions of mountain or hill land in connection with their holdings, *ib.* 4589-4603. 4637-4640——Satisfactory social condition in the hill-side districts, *ib.* 4613, 4614.

Evidence in strong approval of the maintenance of small holdings, witness supplying sundry details as to their satisfactory cultivation and production and as to the thrifty and prosperous condition of the occupiers or owners, *T. Jones* 4697 *et seq.*

Explanation that in Wales only 60 per cent. of the whole surface is accounted for in the Agricultural Returns, *Cragie* 4981.

Variation in the value of land in Wales from a few pence to a sovereign per acre, the selling price being about thirty years' purchase, *G. Jones* 9544-9548.

See also *Cardiganshire. Merionethshire. Montgomeryshire.*

Wantage, The Right Hon. Lord, K.C.B., V.C. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Ownership by witness of land in Berkshire and Northamptonshire; he farms largely and successfully in both counties, 1643, 1644—— Objection of the late Lord Overstone (from whom witness and his wife inherit) to a system of allotments, 1645, 1646——Encouragement of allotments and small holdings by witness; large number of allotments upon his estates, there being also some holders up to fifty acres, who are doing well, 1647-1651. 1654.

Varying practice of witness as to the provision of buildings on small holdings; economy in their being erected by the cultivators, 1652-1654. 1745. 1807. 1830, 1831. 1881-1883——No applications have been made to witness for the purchase of small holdings, 1655——Stipulation by witness as to allotment holders paying rent in advance; this is not enforced, 1656. 1832. 1875-1878.

Result of witness' experience that the old class of yeoman farmers have almost entirely disappeared, their extinction being attributed by him to the operation of free trade; belief that this class can never be revived, 1657-1663. 1834, 1835. 1968-1970—— Strong approval of a multiplication of small landowners, facility and economy in the transfer of land being essential for this purpose, 1665-1668. 1746-1758. 1811-1817.

Explanations in detail respecting the constitution, objects, and operation of the Small Farm and Labourers' Land Company (of which witness is chairman); particulars with special refereuce to the Lamborne Estate of the company, the Cottenham and Histon Estate, and the Foxham and Chippenham Estate, 1669 *et seq.*; 1818-1829. 1836 *et seq.* —— Information as to the financial results; average dividend of 3 per cent., 1672-1702. 1836-1840. 1887, 1888. 1950-1961——Very limited applications to the company for the purchase of land, tenants, as a rule, preferring to hire; statement hereon as to the terms of purchase on the Lamborne and other estates; the arrangements as regards cottages and farm buildings, &c., 1677 *et seq.*; 1836 *et seq.*

Importance attached to ownership of small holdings as a great stimulus to improved cultivation, 1705-1707. 1729-1731——Prejudicial effect of the facility of mortgaging in leading to the diminution of small holdings, 1732-1734——Advantage in the smaller holdings or allotments being taken by village artizans and tradesmen, who have other occupations, 1735. 1905-1908. 1921-1924.

Tendency to a return of population from the towns to the country and to the re-creation of small holdings if there were additional facilities of purchase, 1736-1740. 1746-1754. 1886——Opinion that a small cultivator will produce twice as much per acre on his own land as a large farmer produces, 1741, 1742. 1773-1785——Much more labour put into the land when a man has a holding of his own than when he is hired, 1742-1744. 1778-1785. 1942, 1943——Cheapness with which buildings are put up and repairs carried out by small cultivators, 1745, 1789. 1802, 1803.

Gradual migration for years past from the country to the towns, it being highly expedient to apply legislation for preventing any further depopulation of the country districts, 1746 *et seq.*; 1860, 1867. 1965, 1966—— Entire inadequacy of voluntary efforts for the sub-division of land among the poorer classes; illustration in the case of witness' company, though its operation has been very salutary, 1756. 1845-1847. 1850-1865——Instance of the great want of simplification of title, 1757.

Evidence in approval of State loans to local authorities or county councils, with a view to the acquisition of land by the latter for sale to small cultivators as an experiment;

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Wantage, The Right Hon. Lord, K.C.B., V.C. (Analysis of his Evidence)—*continued.*

ment; that is, provided the county rate and borough rate be liable for the risk, so that the area of risk may be as large as possible, 1759–1772. 1808–1812. 1848, 1849. 1919, 1920——Immense value attached to a multiplication of small freeholds as increasing the security of property, 1754. 1759. 1787. 1834——More profitable results from small than from large holdings, 1778–1785. 1834. 1879, 1880. 1884, 1885. 1940–1949.

Suggestion that the holdings might be from about thirty to fifty acres, there being considerable quantities of land suitable for sub-division, 1786–1796. 1806. 1884..1921——Statement to the effect that on a holding of fifty acres all the required buildings could be provided through the freeholder for about 100 *l.*; 1797–1807. 1962–1964——Equally good quality of the produce of small as of large farms, 1868–1870——Profitable production of milk and eggs on small as compared with large farms, 1871. 1926–1931. 1945–1949——Necessity of suitable land and convenient markets in order to grow fruit at a profit, 1873, 1874.

Doubt as to the necessity of any further legislation in respect of compensation to tenants in the matter of fruit trees, buildings, &c., which they have provided, 1909–1919——Frequent success of Scotchmen as small cultivators where Englishmen would fail, 1925.

Belief that local authorities could raise loans and administer a system of small holdings, with a profit of four or five per cent., 1956–1959. 1967——Question whether the system of a perpetual quit-rent would be satisfactory to small holders, 1972–1976——Doubt also as to the advantage of facilitating mortgage of the land as a means of enabling tenants to provide the purchase money, 1977–1981.

Warrack, James. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Explanations in detail of the terms upon which witness purchased nineteen acres of land on the Lamborne Estate (Berkshire), the provision of buildings, the mode of cultivation and amount of stock, and the satisfactory results generally, the land being worked entirely by himself, 1982 *et seq.*

Former experience of witness upon a small farm in Aberdeenshire, where he was badly used by the landlord, so that he resolved to work for himself in future if he could obtain the land, 2051–2054. 2134–2136. 2230–2232——Belief that land in Aberdeenshire might suitably be cultivated by small holders, though the climate is not so good as in Berkshire, 2227–2229.

Waste and Uncultivated Lands. Very large area of waste and uncultivated land available to be dealt with by the local authorities; proposal that there be a commission of inquiry as to their extent, character, and fitness for reclamation, *Collings* 692–707. 815. 1054–1064——Deprecation of the conversion of waste or inferior land into small holdings, *Standring* 3272–3275. 3302. 3322–3324——Strong opinion that any person should have power to enter upon uncultivated lands for the purpose of cultivation on condition of paying a fair price; definition of the exemptions to be allowed, *Dodd* 5557–5581. 5609–5620. 5716–5720. 5745.——*See* also *Dartmoor. Inclosures.*

Wellingborough (*Northampton*). Acquisition by the Wellingborough Permanent Allotment Association five years ago of a farm of 183 acres on lease, at a rent of 320 *l.* 5 *s.* a year, which they have let out in plots of from ten poles to seven or eight acres, there being about 200 holders, *Gibbon* 3534–3543. 3651——Information respecting the working of the foregoing arrangement and the very successful results achieved; great increase of production whilst the farm is worth about 1,000 *l.* more than it was before sub-division, *ib.* 3544–3554. 3595. 3651–3659.

Total of about 500 acres of allotments and small holdings around Wellingborough; great boon if there were 5,000; *Gibbons* 3550–3555. 3597 *et seq.*——Large number of men in Wellingborough who could utilise holdings up to thirty acres, *ib.* 3723–3726.

Westmoreland. Explanations respecting the large reduction in the number of small holders in Westmoreland during the last 100 years; several causes of this reduction, the tendency having been against sub-division of the land, *Punchard* 6925–6937. 6952, 6953. 6985–7007. 7093, 7094. 7221——Beneficial results on the whole from the consolidation of farms in the county, *ib.* 6938–6940. 6985–6994. 7135–7142. 7196–7200——Absence of difficulty in letting large farms when they become vacant, *ib.* 6942.

Examination as to the general character of the farms and holdings; large extent to which farms which were formerly arable have now become mainly pasture, *Punchard* 6943–6967. 6978–6996. 7095 *et seq.*; 7184–7189. 7218–7221——Absorption of small holdings in the county due to economic causes and not to legislation, *ib.* 6964, 6965.

Statement that, on the whole, the small farmers do as well as the larger ones; exceptional cases, however, where the small holdings are as productive as large ones, *Punchard* 7081*–7083. 7124–7128. 7271——Instances in which small farms are held as adjuncts to other employments, *ib.* 7086–7091——Information as to the rents per acre in the county, *ib.* 7153–7158. 7274–7278.

See also *Bective Estate. Inclosures. Number of Small Holdings.* "*Statesmen.*"

Wilburton.

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Wilburton. Information as to the inclosure of the parish of Wilburton in 1847, nearly the whole of the waste having been divided among the commoners as compensation, *Pell* 1199–1208. 1442–1450.

Wimpenny, George. (Analysis of his Evidence.)—Occupation by witness of a farm of about seven acres of grass land at Delamere (Cheshire); he commenced with four acres and a cow, and now has four cows, and owns about two-and-a-half acres, for which he paid 440 *l.*, having borrowed some of the purchase money, 3366–3392. 3410–3416. 3486–3488. 3501—Explanation respecting the higher rents obtained for small than for large holdings about Delamere: much greater demand for the former, 3376–3382. 3396–3400. 3423–3428. 3437–3442. 3461–3469. 3479–3485.

Satisfactory results in witness' case, he being much better off than if he had continued an agricultural labourer; success also of the majority of the small holders in the district, 3383–3395. 3417–3436. 3470–3478. 3486–3495—Entire approval of farm labourers and others who have saved some money being helped by the local authority to obtain small holdings; objection, however, to a system of loans out of the rates to men without some capital, on account of the risk of loss, 3401–3409. 3437–3445. 3456–3460. 3493–3511. 3519–3521—Conclusion adverse generally to compulsory powers in the matter of small holdings, 3401–3409.

Profitable results from damson growing, but not from apples, 3447, 3448—Very heavy tithes upon part of witness' holding, 3449–3452—Absence of pauperism where there are small holdings, 3453–3455—Expenditure by witness on a building upon some land rented by him: partial compensation received upon sale of the land, 3483–3485. 3522–3526—Advantage if two large Crown farms at Delamere were converted into small farms upon which separate families could live, 3512–3518.

Y.

Yeomen. Result of witness' experience that the old class of yeoman farmers have almost entirely disappeared, their extinction being attributed by him to the operation of free trade; belief that this class can never be revived, *Lord Wantage* 1657–1663. 1834, 1835. 1968–1971—Considerable reduction in the number of yeoman farmers, owning from 100 to 300 acres; causes to which owing, *Druce* 7413–7416. 7578–7583—Opinion adverse to any increase of the yeomen class, witness preferring the position of tenant farmers, *ib.* 7578–7587.

Young, Arthur. Quotation of the views of Arthur Young as an authority against small farms; advantage attached by him to ownership, *Druce* 7497. 7611–7616. 7682–7688.

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